

Medication Information Sheet

filgrastim (fill-GRA-stim)

This document provides general information about your medication. It does not replace the advice of your health care professional. Always discuss your therapy with your health care professional and refer to the package insert for more details.

Other Name: Neupogen®, Grastofil®, Nivestym™

Appearance: Clear, colourless solution

What is this medication for?

- Filgrastim is used to increase the growth of your white blood cells, which help your body fight against infection.
- This medication may also be used to increase in the number of white blood cells to be collected for a stem cell transplant and to help your white blood cells recover after a bone marrow or stem cell transplant.
- Filgrastim is available as a biosimilar medication. See our [biosimilar](#) pamphlet for more information.

What should I do before I have this medication?

- Tell your doctor if you have or had significant medical condition(s), especially if you have or had:
 - heart disease
 - sickle cell anemia
 - any allergies
- People who have cancer are at a higher risk of developing other cancers. Also, some cancer medications, may increase this risk. You should discuss this with your doctor.

How will this medication affect sex, pregnancy and breastfeeding?

- The use of this medication in men or women may cause harm to the unborn baby if pregnancy occurs. Let your health care team know if you or your partner is pregnant, becomes pregnant during treatment, or if you are breastfeeding
- ► **Use 2 effective forms of birth control at the same time** while taking this drug. Keep using birth control for at least **6 months** after your last dose unless your health care team told you differently. Talk to your health care team to figure out the best method(s) for you and/or your partner.

- Do not breastfeed while using this drug.
- This medication is unlikely to affect fertility (ability to get pregnant)

How is this medication given?

- This drug is usually given daily by injection under the skin.
- The injection should be given only on the days specified by your doctor.
- If you miss your filgrastrm dose, check with your health care team before taking the missed dose.
- If you (or your caregiver) are giving the injection, be sure you understand how to measure the **exact dose of filgrastim** prescribed, as well as the proper method for preparing and injecting the drug. Talk to your nurse or pharmacist for more information.

What else do I need to know while on this medication?

- This medication can interact with other medications and can result in the treatment not working as well or cause severe side effects.
- Make sure your health care team knows about all your medications (prescription, over-the-counter, herbals and supplements). Check with your health care team before starting or stopping any of them.
- Drinking alcohol and smoking during your treatment may increase some side effects and make your medication less effective. Speak to your health care team about smoking and drinking alcohol while on treatment.

How should I safely store this medication?

- Keep in the refrigerator, but do not freeze. Keep out of sight and reach of children and pets.
- Never reuse needles. Proper disposal of drug vials, needle covers, needles and syringes is very important. They must always be disposed of in a puncture-proof container. Ask your pharmacist for help to properly dispose of these items, including the filled container.
- Do not throw out any unused medications at home. Bring them to your pharmacy to be thrown away safely.

What are the side effects of this medication?

The following side effects have been seen in people using filgrastim with other chemotherapy drugs, so some of these effects may also be related to chemotherapy. You may not have all of the side effects below. You may have side effects that are not listed.

If you develop signs or symptoms of a **fever** (if your temperature taken in your mouth (oral temperature) is above 38.3°C or 100.9°F at any time OR above 38.0°C or 100.4°F for at least one hour, chills, sore throat) call your doctor or get emergency medical help **right away**.

Side effects and what to do	When to contact doctor?
Common Side Effects (10 to 24 out of 100 people)	
<p>Pain in the joints or muscles, lower back pain, bone pain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May take acetaminophen (Tylenol) tablets as needed for mild aches and pains. Talk to your doctor first before using ibuprofen (Advil) or naproxen (Aleve), since these may increase bleeding risk. • If you feel unwell, take your temperature before using any of these drugs as they may mask fever • If the pain still bothers you after 24 to 48 hours, talk to your health care team 	<p>Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe</p>

Other rare, but serious side effects are possible.

If you experience ANY of the following, speak to your cancer health care provider or get emergency medical help right away:

- irregular heartbeat, chest pain and/or shortness of breath
- dizziness or fainting during or shortly after the drug is given
- signs of an allergy such as rash, chest or throat tightness during or shortly after the drug is given
- reactions at the injection site such as redness, swelling, itching or bruising
- signs of kidney problems such as swollen ankles, blood in urine (pee) or brown coloured urine, or passing little or no urine
- pain in the left upper belly or shoulder
- signs of a sickle cell crisis such as severe chest, belly or joint pain

July 2020 Added Nivestym™ to Other Names section

For more links on how to manage your symptoms go to www.cancercareontario.ca/symptoms.

The information set out in the medication information sheets, regimen information sheets, and symptom management information (for patients) contained in the Drug Formulary (the "Formulary") is intended to be used by health professionals and patients for informational purposes only. The information is not intended to cover all possible uses, directions, precautions, drug interactions or side effects of a certain drug, nor should it be used to indicate that use of a particular drug is safe, appropriate or effective for a given condition.

A patient should always consult a healthcare provider if he/she has any questions regarding the information set out in the Formulary. The information in the Formulary is not intended to act as or replace medical advice and should not be relied upon in any such regard. All uses of the Formulary are subject to clinical judgment and actual prescribing patterns may not follow the information provided in the Formulary.