

## Medication Information Sheet

**vinBLAStine** (Vin-BLAST-een)

*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.*

**Appearance:** Clear, colourless solution for injection

**What is this medication for?**

- For treating certain lymphomas, cancer of the bladder, testes, Kaposi's sarcoma, or other cancers.

**What should I do before I have this medication?**

- Tell your health care team if you have or had significant medical condition(s), such as:
  - ◊ liver disease
  - ◊ nerve problems (numbness/tingling of fingers or toes)
  - ◊ or any allergies

**Remember to:**

- Tell your health care team about all of the other medications you are taking.
- Keep taking other medications that have been prescribed for you, unless you have been told not to by your health care team.

**How will this medication affect sex, pregnancy and breastfeeding?****Talk to your health care team about:**

- How this treatment may affect your sexual health.
- Changes to your menstrual cycle (periods), if this applies to you.
- How this treatment may affect your ability to have a baby, if this applies to you.

This treatment may harm an unborn baby. Tell your health care team if you or your partner are pregnant, become pregnant during treatment, or are breastfeeding.

- If there is **any** chance of pregnancy happening, you and your partner together must use **2 effective forms of birth control** at the same time **until 6 months** after your last treatment dose. Talk to your health care team about which birth control options are best for you.
- Do not breastfeed while on this medication.

## How is this medication given?

- This drug is only given by injection into a vein. Talk to your health care team about your treatment schedule.
- If you missed your treatment appointment, talk to your health care team to find out what to do.

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

- **Will this medication interact with other medications or natural health products?**
  - This medication can interact with other medications, vitamins, foods and natural health products. Interactions can make the treatment not work as well or cause severe side effects.
  - Tell your health care team about all of your:
    - prescription and over-the-counter (non-prescription) medications and all other drugs, such as marijuana (medical or recreational)
    - natural health products such as vitamins, herbal teas, homeopathic medicines, and other supplements
  - Check with your health care team before starting or stopping any of them.
- If you take seizure medications (such as phenytoin), your health care team will monitor your blood levels closely and may change your dose.

## What should I do if I feel unwell, have pain, a headache or a fever?

- **Always** check your temperature to see if you have a fever **before** taking any medications for fever or pain (such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil)).
  - Fever can be a sign of infection that may need treatment right away.
  - If you take these medications before you check for fever, they may lower your temperature and you may not know you have an infection.

## How to check for fever:

Keep a digital (electronic) thermometer at home and take your temperature if you feel hot or unwell (for example, chills, headache, mild pain).

- You have a fever if your temperature taken in your mouth (oral temperature) is:

- 38.3°C (100.9°F) or higher at any time

OR

- 38.0°C (100.4°F) or higher for at least one hour.

#### **If you do have a fever:**

- **Try to contact your health care team. If you are not able to talk to them for advice, you MUST get emergency medical help right away.**
- Ask your health care team for the [Fever](#) pamphlet for more information.

#### **If you do not have a fever** but have mild symptoms such as headache or mild pain:

- Ask your health care team about the right medication for you. **Acetaminophen (Tylenol®)** is a safe choice for most people.
- **Talk to your health care team before you start taking** Ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®), naproxen (Aleve®) or ASA (Aspirin®), as they may increase your chance of bleeding or interact with your cancer treatment.
- Talk to your health care team if you already take **low dose aspirin** for a medical condition (such as a heart problem). It may still be safe to take.

#### **What to DO while on this medication:**

- DO check with your health care team before getting any vaccinations, surgery, dental work or other medical procedures.
- DO tell your health care team if you have any new pain, numbness or tingling of your hands or feet. This is especially important if you are having trouble doing tasks (like doing up buttons, writing, walking) or if you have severe pain or numbness.
- DO protect your skin from the sun. Wear a long sleeved shirt, long pants and a hat. Apply sunscreen with UVA and UVB protection and an SPF of at least 30. Your skin may be more sensitive to the sun and you could develop a bad sunburn or rash more easily.

#### **What NOT to DO while on this medication:**

- DO NOT eat or drink grapefruit, starfruit, Seville oranges or their juices (or products that contain these) while taking this drug. They may increase the amount of drug in your blood and increase side effects.
- DO NOT smoke or drink alcohol while on treatment without talking to your health care team first. Smoking and drinking can make side effects worse and make your treatment not work as well.

## What are the side effects of this medication?

The following table lists side effects that you may have when getting vinblastine. The table is set up to list the most common side effects first and the least common last. It is unlikely that you will have all of the side effects listed and you may have some that are not listed.

Read over the side effect table so that you know what to look for and when to get help. Refer to this table if you experience any side effects while on vinblastine.

More Common Side Effects (more than 10 out of 100 people)	
Side effects and what to do	When to contact health care team
<p><b>Neuropathy (Tingling, numb toes or fingers) (may be severe)</b></p> <p><b>What to look for?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numbness or tingling of your fingers and toes may happen after starting your treatment.</li> <li>• Sometimes it can be painful and feel like burning sensation, which may be severe.</li> </ul> <p><b>What to do?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Talk to your health care team if you have symptoms of neuropathy.</b></li> <li>• Numbness and tingling may slowly get better after your treatment ends.</li> </ul> <p>In rare cases, it may continue long after treatment ends. If you continue to have bothersome symptoms, talk to your health care team for advice.</p>	<p>Talk to your health care team, especially if you have trouble doing tasks like doing up buttons, writing, moving, severe pain or numbness</p>
<p><b>Low neutrophils (white blood cells) in the blood (neutropenia)</b></p> <p>When neutrophils are low, you are at risk of getting an infection more easily. Ask your health care team for the <a href="#">Neutropenia (Low white blood cell count)</a> pamphlet for more information.</p> <p><b>What to look for?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you feel hot or unwell (for example if you have chills or a new cough), you <b>must</b> check your temperature to see if you have a fever.</li> <li>• Do not take medications that treat a fever before you take your temperature (for example, Tylenol®, acetaminophen, Advil® or ibuprofen).</li> <li>• Do not eat or drink anything hot or cold right before taking your</li> </ul>	<p>If you have a fever, try to contact your health care team. If you are unable to talk to the team for advice, you <b>MUST</b> get emergency medical help right away.</p>

More Common Side Effects (more than 10 out of 100 people)	
Side effects and what to do	When to contact health care team
<p>temperature.</p> <p>You have a fever if your temperature taken in your mouth (oral temperature) is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 38.3°C (100.9°F) or higher at any time OR</li> <li>• 38.0°C (100.4°F) or higher for at least one hour.</li> </ul> <p><b>What to do?</b></p> <p><b>If your health care team has told you that you have low neutrophils:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wash your hands often to prevent infection.</li> <li>• Check with your health care team before getting any vaccines, surgeries, medical procedures or visiting your dentist.</li> <li>• Keep a digital thermometer at home so you can easily check for a fever.</li> </ul> <p><b>If you have a fever:</b></p> <p><b>If you have a fever, try to contact your health care team. If you are unable to talk to the team for advice, you must get emergency medical help right away.</b></p>	
<p><b>Low platelets in the blood</b></p> <p>When your platelets are low, you are at risk for bleeding and bruising. Ask your health care team for the <a href="#">Low Platelet Count</a> pamphlet for more information.</p> <p><b>What to look for?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch for signs of bleeding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ bleeding from your gums</li> <li>◦ unusual or heavy nosebleeds</li> <li>◦ bruising easily or more than normal</li> <li>◦ black coloured stools (poo) or blood in your stools (poo)</li> <li>◦ coughing up red or brown coloured mucus</li> <li>◦ dizziness, constant headache or changes in your vision</li> <li>◦ heavy vaginal bleeding</li> <li>◦ red or pink coloured urine (pee)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Talk to your health care team if you have any signs of bleeding. If you have bleeding that doesn't stop or is severe, you <b>MUST</b> get emergency medical help right away</p>

<b>More Common Side Effects (more than 10 out of 100 people)</b>	
<b>Side effects and what to do</b>	<b>When to contact health care team</b>
<p><b>What to do?</b></p> <p><b>If your health care team has told you that you have low platelets:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell your pharmacist that your platelet count may be low before taking any prescriptions or over-the-counter medication.</li> <li>• Check with your healthcare team before you go to the dentist.</li> <li>• Take care of your mouth and use a soft toothbrush.</li> <li>• Try to prevent cuts and bruises.</li> <li>• Ask your health care team what activities are safe for you.</li> <li>• Your treatment may have to be delayed if you have low platelets. Your health care team may recommend a blood transfusion.</li> </ul> <p><b>If you have signs of bleeding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you have a small bleed, clean the area with soap and water or a saline (saltwater) rinse. Apply pressure for at least 10 minutes.</li> </ul> <p><b>If you have bleeding that does not stop or is severe (very heavy), you must get emergency medical help right away.</b></p>	
<p><b>Constipation (may be severe)</b></p> <p><b>What to look for?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having bowel movements (going poo) less often than normal.</li> <li>• Small hard stools (poo) that look like pellets.</li> <li>• The need to push hard and strain to have any stool (poo) come out.</li> <li>• Stomach ache or cramps.</li> <li>• A bloated belly, feeling of fullness, or discomfort.</li> <li>• Leaking of watery stools (poo).</li> <li>• Lots of gas or burping.</li> <li>• Nausea or vomiting.</li> </ul> <p><b>What to do?</b></p> <p><b>To help prevent constipation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to eat more fiber rich foods like fruits with skin, leafy greens and whole grains.</li> <li>• Drink at least 6 to 8 cups of liquids each day unless your health care team</li> </ul>	Talk to your health care team if it does not improve or if it is severe

<b>More Common Side Effects (more than 10 out of 100 people)</b>	
<b>Side effects and what to do</b>	<b>When to contact health care team</b>
<p>has told you to drink more or less.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be Active. Exercise can help to keep you regular.</li> <li>• If you take opioid pain medication, ask your health care team if eating more fibre is right for you.</li> </ul> <p><b>To help treat constipation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you have not had a bowel movement in 2 to 3 days you may need to take a laxative (medication to help you poo) to help you have regular bowel movements. Ask your health care team what to do.</li> </ul> <p>Ask your health care team for the <a href="#">Constipation</a> Pamphlet for more information.</p>	
<p><b>Pains or cramps in the belly</b></p> <p><b>What to look for?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pain or cramps in your belly.</li> <li>• Constipation and diarrhea can cause pain in your belly.</li> </ul> <p><b>What to do?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the pain is severe, gets worse or doesn't go away, talk to your health care team about other possible causes.</li> </ul>	Talk to your health care team if it does not improve or if it is severe
<p><b>Low appetite</b></p> <p><b>What to look for?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of interest in food or not feeling hungry.</li> <li>• Weight loss.</li> </ul> <p><b>What to do?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to eat your favourite foods.</li> <li>• Eat small meals throughout the day.</li> <li>• You may need to take meal supplements to help keep your weight up.</li> <li>• Talk to your health care team if you have no appetite.</li> </ul> <p>Ask your health care team for the <a href="#">Loss of Appetite</a> pamphlet for more information.</p>	Talk to your health care team if it does not improve or if it is severe

More Common Side Effects (more than 10 out of 100 people)	
Side effects and what to do	When to contact health care team
<p><b>Nausea and vomiting (generally mild)</b></p> <p><b>What to look for?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nausea is feeling like you need to throw up. You may also feel light-headed.</li> <li>• You may feel nausea within hours to days after your treatment.</li> </ul> <p><b>What to do?</b></p> <p><b>To help prevent nausea:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is easier to prevent nausea than to treat it once it happens.</li> <li>• Drink clear liquids and have small meals. Get fresh air and rest.</li> <li>• Do not eat spicy, fried foods or foods with a strong smell.</li> <li>• Limit caffeine (like coffee, tea) and avoid alcohol.</li> </ul> <p><b>If you have nausea or vomiting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take your rescue (as-needed) anti-nausea medication(s) as prescribed.</li> <li>• Ask your health care team for the <a href="#">Nausea &amp; Vomiting</a> pamphlet for more information.</li> <li>• Talk to your health care team if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ nausea lasts more than 48 hours</li> <li>◦ vomiting lasts more than 24 hours or if it is severe</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Talk to your health care team if nausea lasts more than 48 hours or vomiting lasts more than 24 hours or if severe</p>
<p><b>Taste changes</b></p> <p><b>What to look for?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food and drinks may taste different than usual.</li> </ul> <p><b>What to do?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat foods that are easy to chew, such as scrambled eggs, pasta, soups, cooked vegetables.</li> <li>• Taste foods at different temperatures, since the flavour may change.</li> <li>• Try different forms of foods, like fresh, frozen or canned.</li> <li>• Experiment with non-spicy foods, spices and seasonings.</li> </ul>	<p>Talk to your health care team if it does not improve or if it is severe</p>



<b>More Common Side Effects (more than 10 out of 100 people)</b>	
<b>Side effects and what to do</b>	<b>When to contact health care team</b>
<p><b>Mouth sores</b></p> <p><b>What to look for?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Round, painful, white or gray sores inside your mouth that can occur on the tongue, lips, gums, or inside your cheeks.</li> <li>• In more severe cases they may make it hard to swallow, eat or brush your teeth.</li> <li>• They may last for 3 days or longer.</li> </ul> <p><b>What to do?</b></p> <p><b>To help prevent mouth sores:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take care of your mouth by gently brushing and flossing regularly.</li> <li>• Rinse your mouth often with a homemade mouthwash.</li> <li>• To make a homemade mouthwash, mix 1 teaspoonful of baking soda and 1 teaspoonful of salt in 4 cups (1L) of water.</li> <li>• Do not use store-bought mouthwashes, especially those with alcohol, because they may irritate your mouth.</li> </ul> <p><b>If you have mouth sores:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid hot, spicy, acidic, hard or crunchy foods.</li> <li>• Your doctor may prescribe a special mouthwash to relieve mouth sores and prevent infection.</li> <li>• Talk to your health care team as soon as you notice mouth or lip sores or if it hurts to eat, drink or swallow.</li> </ul> <p>Ask your health care team for the <a href="#">Oral Care (Mouth Care)</a> pamphlet for more information.</p>	<p>Talk to your health care team as soon as you notice mouth or lip sores or if it hurts to eat, drink or swallow</p>
<p><b>Hair thinning or loss (generally mild)</b></p> <p><b>What to look for?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your hair may begin to become thin or fall out during or after treatment.</li> <li>• In most cases, your hair will grow back after treatment, but the texture or colour may change.</li> <li>• In very rare cases, hair loss may be permanent.</li> </ul>	<p>Talk to your health care team if this bothers you</p>

More Common Side Effects (more than 10 out of 100 people)	
Side effects and what to do	When to contact health care team
<p><b>What to do?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a gentle soft brush.</li> <li>• Do not use hair sprays, bleaches, dyes and perms.</li> </ul>	

**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:**

- Fever, itchiness, rash, swollen lips, face or tongue, chest and throat tightness, usually during or shortly after the medication is given
- Burning, stinging or other pain while the medication is being given
- Red, itchy, bruised, and/or swollen skin where the injection was given
- Swelling in your hands, ankles, feet or other areas of your body
- Weight gain that is not normal for you, new pain in your lower back, peeing less than usual
- Muscle spasms, cramping, weakness, twitching, or seizures, confusion
- Difficulty swallowing
- Drooling, drooping eyelids or face
- Any changes to your hearing

**Who do I contact if I have questions or need help?**

My cancer health care provider is: \_\_\_\_\_

During the day I should contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Evenings, weekends and holidays: \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Notes:**

---



---



---



---

