

Bleomycin

About This Drug

Bleomycin is used to treat cancer. It is given in the vein (IV), as an injection under your skin (subcutaneously), as injection into the muscle (IM), or as an injection into the space between the two layers that surround the lung (intrapleural).

Possible Side Effects

- Soreness of the mouth and throat. You may have red areas, white patches, or sores that hurt.
- Weight loss
- Decreased appetite (decreased hunger)
- General discomfort, a feeling of being unwell
- Rash, sometimes with small fluid-filled bumps/blisters
- Itching
- Stretch marks
- Thickening and/or darkening of the skin
- Skin tenderness and/or redness
- Changes in your nail color, nail loss and/or brittle nail
- Hair loss. Hair loss is often temporary, although with certain medicine, hair loss can sometimes be permanent. Hair loss may happen suddenly or gradually. If you lose hair, you may lose it from your head, face, armpits, pubic area, chest, and/or legs. You may also notice your hair getting thin.

Note: *Not all possible side effects are included above.*

Warnings and Precautions

- Thickening and/or inflammation (swelling) of the lung tissues which can be life-threatening. You may have a dry cough or trouble breathing.
- Allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis are rare but may happen in some patients. Signs of allergic reaction to this drug may be swelling of the face, feeling like your tongue or throat are swelling, trouble breathing, rash, itching, fever, chills, feeling dizzy, and/or feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or not normal way. **If this happens, do not take another dose of this drug. You should get urgent medical treatment.**
- A severe reaction to this drug may happen in some lymphoma patients. Symptoms may include confusion, fever, chills, low blood pressure and/or wheezing. This reaction can happen right away or several hours after receiving the first or second dose of bleomycin.

- Heart attack, stroke or other blood vessel problems may rarely occur
- Changes in your kidney function
- Changes in your liver function

Important Information

- This drug may be present in the saliva, tears, sweat, urine, stool, vomit, semen, and vaginal secretions. Talk to your doctor and/or your nurse about the necessary precautions to take during this time.

Treating Side Effects

- Drink plenty of fluids (a minimum of eight glasses per day is recommended).
- Mouth care is very important. Your mouth care should consist of routine, gentle cleaning of your teeth or dentures and rinsing your mouth with a mixture of 1/2 teaspoon of salt in 8 ounces of water or 1/2 teaspoon of baking soda in 8 ounces of water. This should be done at least after each meal and at bedtime.
- If you have mouth sores, avoid mouthwash that has alcohol. Also avoid alcohol and smoking because they can bother your mouth and throat.
- To help with decreased appetite, eat small, frequent meals. Eat foods high in calories and protein, such as meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, tofu, eggs, nuts, milk, yogurt, cheese, ice cream, pudding, and nutritional supplements.
- Consider using sauces and spices to increase taste. Daily exercise, with your doctor's approval, may increase your appetite.
- To help with weight loss, drink fluids that contribute calories (whole milk, juice, soft drinks, sweetened beverages, milkshakes, and nutritional supplements) instead of water.
- Include a source of protein at every meal and snack, such as meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, tofu, eggs, nuts, milk, yogurt, cheese, ice cream, pudding, and nutritional supplements.
- To help with hair loss, wash with a mild shampoo and avoid washing your hair every day. Avoid coloring your hair.
- Avoid rubbing your scalp, pat your hair or scalp dry.
- Limit your use of hair spray, electric curlers, blow dryers, and curling irons.
- If you are interested in getting a wig, talk to your nurse and they can help you get in touch with programs in your local area.
- Moisturize your skin several times a day.
- Avoid sun exposure and apply sunscreen routinely when outside.
- Keeping your nails moisturized may help with brittleness.
- If you get a rash do not put anything on it unless your doctor or nurse says you may. Keep the area around the rash clean and dry. Ask your doctor for medicine if your rash bothers you.

Food and Drug Interactions

- There are no known interactions of bleomycin with food.



- Check with your doctor or pharmacist about all other prescription medicines and over-the-counter medicines and dietary supplements (vitamins, minerals, herbs, and others) you are taking before starting this medicine as there are known drug interactions with bleomycin. Also, check with your doctor or pharmacist before starting any new prescription or over-the-counter medicines, or dietary supplements to make sure that there are no interactions.

When to Call the Doctor

Call your doctor or nurse if you have any of these symptoms and/or any new or unusual symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4° F (38° C) or higher
- Chills
- Confusion
- Wheezing and/or trouble breathing
- Dry cough
- Chest pain or symptoms of a heart attack. Most heart attacks involve pain in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes. The pain may go away and come back, or it can be constant. It can feel like pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain. Sometimes pain is felt in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach. **If any of these symptoms last 2 minutes, call 911.**
- Symptoms of a stroke such as sudden numbness or weakness of your face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of your body; sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding; sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes; sudden trouble walking, feeling dizzy, loss of balance or coordination; or sudden bad headache with no known cause. **If you have any of these symptoms for 2 minutes, call 911.**
- Pain in your mouth or throat that makes it hard to eat or drink
- Lasting loss of appetite or rapid weight loss of five pounds in a week
- Tiredness that interferes with your daily activities
- Signs of possible liver problems: dark urine, pale bowel movements, pain in your abdomen, feeling very tired and weak, unusual itching, or yellowing of the eyes or skin
- Decreased or very dark urine
- A new rash or a rash that is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Itching that is bothersome
- Signs of inflammation/infection (redness, swelling, pain) of the tissue around your nails.
- Signs of allergic reaction: swelling of the face, feeling like your tongue or throat are swelling, trouble breathing, rash, itching, fever, chills, feeling dizzy, and/or feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or not normal way. **If this happens, call 911 for emergency care.**
- If you think you may be pregnant

Reproduction Warnings

- **Pregnancy warning:** This drug can have harmful effects on the unborn baby. Women of childbearing potential should use effective methods of birth control during your cancer treatment. Let your doctor know right away if you think you may be pregnant.



- **Breastfeeding warning:** It is not known if this drug passes into breast milk, for this reason, women should not breastfeed during treatment because this drug could enter the breast milk and cause harm to a breastfeeding baby.
- **Fertility warning:** Fertility studies have not been done with this drug. Talk to your doctor or nurse if you plan to have children. Ask for information on sperm or egg banking.

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