

## Cladribine (Leustatin®)

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### About This Drug

Cladribine is used to treat cancer. It is given in the vein (IV).

### Possible Side Effects

- Bone marrow suppression. This is a decrease in the number of white blood cells, red blood cells, and platelets. This may raise your risk of infection, make you tired and weak (fatigue), and raise your risk of bleeding.
- Infection
- Headache
- Fever
- Tiredness
- Nausea
- Rash
- Skin and tissue irritation including redness, pain, warmth, or swelling at the IV site if the drug leaks out of the vein and into nearby tissue

**Note:** Each of the side effects above was reported in 10% or greater of patients treated with Cladribine. Not all possible side effects are included above.

### Warnings and Precautions

- Severe muscle weakness in your arms and/or legs that can very rarely be irreversible
- Severe effects on the nerves
- Severe bone marrow suppression
- Fever in the setting of decreased white blood cells, which is a serious condition that can be life-threatening
- Severe infections, including viral, bacterial and fungal, which can be life-threatening
- Tumor lysis syndrome: This drug may act on the cancer cells very quickly. This may affect how your kidneys work.
- Changes in your kidney function

**Note:** Some of the side effects above are very rare. If you have concerns and/or questions, please discuss them with your medical team.

## 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.
- Talk to your doctor before receiving any vaccinations during your treatment. Some vaccinations are not recommended while receiving cladribine.

## Treating Side Effects

- Manage tiredness by pacing your activities for the day.
- Be sure to include periods of rest between energy-draining activities.
- To decrease the risk of infection, wash your hands regularly.
- Avoid close contact with people who have a cold, the flu, or other infections.
- Take your temperature as your doctor or nurse tells you, and whenever you feel like you may have a fever.
- To help decrease bleeding, use a soft toothbrush. Check with your nurse before using dental floss.
- Be very careful when using knives or tools.
- Use an electric shaver instead of a razor.
- Drink plenty of fluids (a minimum of eight glasses per day is recommended).
- To help with nausea and vomiting, eat small, frequent meals instead of three large meals a day. Choose foods and drinks that are at room temperature. Ask your nurse or doctor about other helpful tips and medicine that is available to help stop or lessen these symptoms.
- 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.
- Moisturize your skin several times day.
- Avoid sun exposure and apply sunscreen routinely when outdoors.
- Keeping your pain under control is important to your well-being. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you are experiencing pain.

## Food and Drug Interactions

- There are no known interactions of cladribine with food or other medications.
- Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all the medicines and dietary supplements (vitamins, minerals, herbs and others) that you are taking at this time. The safety and use of dietary supplements and alternative diets are often not known. Using these might affect your cancer or interfere with your treatment. Until more is known, you should not use dietary supplements or alternative diets without your cancer doctor's help.

## 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
- Tiredness that interferes with your daily activities
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Headache that does not go away
- Weakness or lack of strength to your arms and/or legs
- Wheezing or trouble breathing
- Easy bleeding or bruising
- Nausea that stops you from eating or drinking and/or is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Decreased urine
- Signs of tumor lysis: Confusion or agitation, decreased urine, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, muscle cramping, numbness and/or tingling, seizures.
- While you are getting this drug, please tell your nurse right away if you have any pain, redness, or swelling at the site of the IV infusion
- A new rash or a rash that is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- 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 highly 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 talk to their doctor about the risks and benefits of breastfeeding during treatment with this drug because this drug may enter the breast milk and cause harm to a breastfeeding baby.
- **Fertility warning:** Human fertility studies have not been done with this drug. Talk with your doctor or nurse if you plan to have children. Ask for information on sperm or egg banking.

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