

Daunorubicin (Cerubidine)

About This Drug

Daunorubicin 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.
- Soreness of the mouth and throat. You may have red areas, white patches, or sores that hurt.
- Nausea and vomiting (throwing up)
- Diarrhea (loose bowel movements)
- Pain in your abdomen
- Fever and chills
- 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.**
- 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.

If you have received radiation treatments, your skin may become red after daunorubicin. This reaction is called “radiation recall.” Your body is recalling, or remembering, that it had radiation therapy.

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

Warnings and Precautions

- Severe bone marrow suppression
- Congestive heart failure – your heart has less ability to pump blood properly. You may be short of breath. Your arms, hands, legs and feet may swell.
- This drug may raise your risk of getting a second cancer, such as leukemia.

- Tumor lysis syndrome: This drug may act on the cancer cells very quickly. This may affect how your kidneys work.
- 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. Very rarely it may cause local tissue necrosis (death).

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.
- Urine color may be slightly pink or red starting several hours after you get this drug. This will slowly go away within one to two days.

Treating Side Effects

- 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.
- Drink plenty of fluids (a minimum of eight glasses per day is recommended).
- If you throw up or have loose bowel movements, you should drink more fluids so that you do not become dehydrated (lack of water in the body from losing too much fluid).
- If you have diarrhea, eat low-fiber foods that are high in protein and calories and avoid foods that can irritate your digestive tracts or lead to cramping.
- Ask your nurse or doctor about medicine that can lessen or stop your diarrhea.
- 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.
- 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 the risk of 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.



- Keeping your pain under control is important to your well-being. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you are experiencing pain.
- To help with hair loss, wash with a mild shampoo and avoid washing your hair every day.
- Avoid rubbing your scalp, pat your hair or scalp dry.
- Avoid coloring your hair.
- 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. You can also call the American Cancer Society at 800-ACS-2345 to find out information about the “Look Good, Feel Better” program close to where you live. It is a free program where women getting chemotherapy can learn about wigs, turbans and scarves as well as makeup techniques and skin and nail care.
- If you received radiation, and your skin becomes red or irritated again, follow the same care instructions you did during radiation treatment. Be sure to tell the nurse or doctor administering your chemotherapy about your skin changes.

Food and Drug Interactions

- There are no known interactions of daunorubicin 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 daunorubicin. 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
- Tiredness that interferes with your daily activities
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Easy bleeding or bruising
- Feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or not normal way (palpitations)
- Trouble breathing
- Pain in your abdomen that does not go away
- Pain in your mouth or throat that makes it hard to eat or drink
- Nausea that stops you from eating or drinking and/or is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Throwing up more than 3 times a day
- Diarrhea, 4 times in one day or diarrhea with lack of strength or a feeling of being dizzy
- Swelling of your legs, ankles, and/or feet
- Decreased urine, or very dark urine



- Weight gain of 5 pounds in one week (fluid retention)
- 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.**
- 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.
- Signs of tumor lysis: confusion or agitation, decreased urine, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, muscle cramping, numbness and/or tingling, seizures.
- 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:** Women should not breastfeed during treatment because this drug could 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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