

## Docetaxel (Taxotere)

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### About This Drug

Docetaxel 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.
- Fever in the setting of decreased white blood cells, which is a serious condition that can be life-threatening
- Soreness of the mouth and throat. You may have red areas, white patches, or sores that hurt.
- Nausea and vomiting (throwing up)
- Constipation (not able to move bowels)
- Diarrhea (loose bowel movements)
- Infections
- Swelling of your legs, ankles and/or feet, or fluid build-up around your lungs, heart or elsewhere
- Changes in the way food and drinks taste
- Effects on the nerves are called peripheral neuropathy. You may feel numbness, tingling, or pain in your hands and feet. It may be hard for you to button your clothes, open jars, or walk as usual. The effect on the nerves may get worse with more doses of the drug. These effects get better in some people after the drug is stopped but it does not get better in all people.
- Decreased appetite (decreased hunger)
- Weakness
- Pain
- Muscle pain/aching
- Trouble breathing
- Changes in your nail color, you may have nail loss and/or brittle nail
- Hair loss. Hair loss is often temporary, although there have been cases of permanent hair loss reported. 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.
- Allergic skin reaction. You may develop blisters on your skin that are filled with fluid or a severe red rash all over your body that may be painful.
- 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.**

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

## Warnings and Precautions

- Severe bone marrow suppression, including febrile neutropenia – fever in the setting of decreased white blood cells, which may be life threatening.
- Severe allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis which can be life-threatening
- Swelling (inflammation) in the colon in the setting of severely low white blood cells, which raises your risk of infection and can be life-threatening
- Severe skin reactions, including redness, swelling or peeling of skin
- Severe swelling in the eye or other changes in eyesight
- Severe swelling of your legs, ankles and/or feet. Sometimes, fluid can build up in your lungs and/or around your heart causing you trouble breathing.
- If you have a history of abnormal liver function, receive high doses of docetaxel, or have a history of lung cancer and have received treatment with a platinum (type of chemotherapy medication), you have an increased risk of death.
- Severe weakness
- This drug may raise your risk of getting a second cancer such as leukemia and myelodysplastic syndrome.
- Severe peripheral neuropathy - numbness, tingling, or pain in your hands and feet
- This drug contains alcohol and may affect your central nervous system. The central nervous system is made up of your brain and spinal cord. You may feel drunk during and after your treatment and it can impair your ability to drive or use machinery for one to two hours after infusion.
- Tumor lysis syndrome: This drug may act on the cancer cells very quickly. This may affect how your kidneys work.

**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.

## Treating Side Effects

- Manage tiredness by pacing your activities for the day.
- Be sure to include periods of rest between energy-draining activities.
- Get regular exercise. If you feel too tired to exercise vigorously, try taking a short walk.



- 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.
- Mouth care is very important and will help food taste better and improve your appetite. 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.
- Ask your doctor or nurse about medicines that are available to help stop or lessen constipation and/or diarrhea.
- If you are not able to move your bowels, check with your doctor or nurse before you use enemas, laxatives, or suppositories.
- 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.
- 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.
- To help with decreased appetite, 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.
- Keeping your pain under control is important to your well-being. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you are experiencing pain.
- 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.
- Keeping your nails moisturized may help with brittleness.
- 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 have numbness and tingling in your hands and feet, be careful when cooking, walking, and handling sharp objects and hot liquids.

## Food and Drug Interactions

- There are no known interactions of docetaxel with food.
- This drug may interact with other medicines. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all the prescription and over-the-counter medicines and dietary supplements (vitamins, minerals, herbs and others) that you are taking at this time. 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
- Blurred vision or other changes in eyesight
- Easy bruising or bleeding
- Wheezing or trouble breathing
- Chest pain
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Tiredness that interferes with your daily activities
- 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
- Lasting loss of appetite or rapid weight loss of five pounds in a week
- Diarrhea, 4 times in one day or diarrhea with lack of strength or a feeling of being dizzy
- No bowel movement in 3 days or when you feel uncomfortable
- Severe abdominal pain that does not go away
- Blood in your stool
- Numbness, tingling, or pain in your hands and feet
- Swelling of legs, ankles, or feet
- Weight gain of 5 pounds in one week (fluid retention)
- Extreme weakness that interferes with normal activities
- New rash and/or itching
- Rash that is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- 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.**



- Flu-like symptoms: fever, headache, muscle and joint aches, and fatigue (low energy, feeling weak)
- Signs of possible liver problems: dark urine, pale bowel movements, bad stomach pain, feeling very tired and weak, unusual itching, or yellowing of the eyes or skin
- Symptoms of being drunk, confusion, or being very sleepy
- Confusion or agitation, decreased urine, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, muscle cramping, numbness and/or tingling, seizures
- General pain that does not go away or is not relieved by prescribed medicine
- If you think you may be pregnant or have impregnated your partner

## Reproduction Warnings

- **Pregnancy warning:** This drug can have harmful effects on the unborn baby. Women of child-bearing potential should use effective methods of birth control during your cancer treatment and for 6 months after treatment. Men with female partners of childbearing potential should use effective methods of birth control during your cancer treatment and for 3 months after your cancer treatment. Let your doctor know right away if you think you may be pregnant or may have impregnated your partner.
- **Breastfeeding warning:** Women should not breastfeed during treatment and for 1 week after treatment because this drug could enter the breast milk and cause harm to a breastfeeding baby.
- **Fertility warning:** In men, this drug may affect your ability to have children in the future. Talk with your doctor or nurse if you plan to have children. Ask for information on sperm banking.

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