

## Interleukin-2 (IL-2, Aldesleukin, Proleukin)

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### About This Drug

Interleukin-2 is used to treat cancer. It is given in the vein (IV).

### Possible Side Effects

- Decrease in the number of red blood cells. This may make you tired and weak.
- Decreased in the number of platelets. This may raise your risk of bleeding.
- Increased heart rate
- Nausea and vomiting (throwing up)
- Soreness of the mouth and throat. You may have red areas, white patches, or sores in your mouth that hurt.
- Diarrhea (loose bowel movements)
- Swelling of your legs, ankles and/or feet
- Fever
- Chills
- Changes in your liver function
- Decreased appetite (decreased hunger)
- General discomfort, a feeling of being unwell
- Weakness
- Extreme tiredness or feeling sleepy
- Confusion
- Changes in your kidney function and/or decreased urine
- Trouble breathing because of fluid build-up in your lungs
- Rash
- Itching
- Low blood pressure

**Note:** Each of the side effects above was reported in 20% or greater of patients treated with interleukin-2. Not all possible side effects are included above.

### Warnings and Precautions



- Capillary leak syndrome: A syndrome where fluid and protein can leak from your blood vessels into your tissues. This can cause a decrease in your blood protein level and blood pressure and fluid can accumulate in your tissues and/or lungs.
- Changes in your central nervous system can happen. The central nervous system is made up of your brain and spinal cord. You could feel extreme tiredness, agitation, confusion, hallucinations (see or hear things that are not there), trouble understanding or speaking, loss of control of your bowels or bladder, eyesight changes, numbness, or lack of strength to your arms, legs, face, or body, and coma. **If you start to have any of these symptoms let your doctor know right away.**
- Changes in your white blood cells that may increase your risk of infection
- If you have an autoimmune disease or disorder that causes inflammation, it may get worse with interleukin-2.
- Changes in your thyroid function
- Blood sugar levels may change. If you have diabetes, changes may need to be made to your diabetes medication.
- Changes in your heart function such as heart attack and congestive heart failure – your heart is not pumping blood as well as it should be, and fluid can build up in your body.
- 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.**
- These side effects may be more severe if you are receiving high doses of this medication.

**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.
- Taking this drug can cause an increased risk of having an allergic reaction to iodine contrast material, which may be used in some x-ray procedures. This may happen while you are in treatment with interleukin-2 and for several months after you get the last dose of this drug. Before you have an x-ray procedure with an iodine contrast material, talk with your cancer doctor for further instructions.

## 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 decrease your 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.
- 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).
- 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 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.
- 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 itching, moisturize your skin several times a day.
- Avoid sun exposure and apply sunscreen routinely when outdoors.
- 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.
- If you have diabetes, keep good control of your blood sugar level. Tell your nurse or your doctor if your glucose levels are higher or lower than normal.

## Food and Drug Interactions

- There are no known interactions of interleukin-2 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 interleukin-2. 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
- Easy bleeding or bruising
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Tiredness that interferes with your daily activities
- Confusion and/or agitation
- Hallucinations
- Symptoms of a seizure such as confusion, blacking out, passing out, loss of hearing or vision, blurred vision, unusual smells or tastes (such as burning rubber), trouble talking, tremors or shaking in parts or all of the body, repeated body movements, tense muscles that do not relax, and loss of control of urine and bowels. **If you or your family member suspects you are having a seizure, call 911 right away.**
- Trouble understanding or speaking
- Blurry vision or changes in your eyesight
- Numbness or lack of strength to your arms, legs, face, or body
- Feeling that your heart is beating fast or in a not normal way (palpitations)
- Wheezing and/or trouble breathing
- Lasting loss of appetite or rapid weight loss of five pounds in a week
- 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.**
- Cough
- 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
- Pain in your mouth or throat that makes it hard to eat or drink
- Decreased and/or very dark urine
- Weight gain of 5 pounds in one week (fluid retention)
- Swelling of the hands, feet, or any other part of the body
- Abnormal blood sugar
- Unusual thirst, passing urine often, headache, sweating, shakiness, irritability
- 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
- New rash and/or itching
- Rash that is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Any change in a pre-existing auto-immune or inflammatory condition
- 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 are pregnant or if you have impregnated your partner

## Reproduction Warnings

- **Pregnancy warning:** It is not known if this drug may harm an unborn child. For this reason, be sure to talk with your doctor if you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant while receiving this drug. Let your doctor know right away if you think you may be pregnant or may have impregnated your partner.
- **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:** 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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