

UPMC | HILLMAN CANCER CENTER

Liposomal cytarabine (Depocyt®)

About This Drug

Liposomal cytarabine is used to treat cancer. It is given by injection into the fluid that surrounds the brain and spinal cord (intrathecal).

Possible Side Effects

- Headache
- Inflammation of your arachnoid, a membrane that protects your brain and spinal cord
- Confusion
- Abnormal walking (abnormal gait)
- Fever
- Tiredness/weakness
- Nausea and throwing up (vomiting)
- Constipation (not able to move bowels)
- Back pain
- Seizure. Common symptoms of a seizure can include 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. There are other less common symptoms of seizures. **If you or your family member suspects you are having a seizure, call 911 right away.**

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

Warnings and Precautions

- 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.

- Severe inflammation of your arachnoid, a membrane that protects your brain and spinal cord, which can be life-threatening. You may be given steroids to decrease your risk of this happening. You may have nausea and vomiting, fevers and/or a headache.

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

- Keeping your pain under control is important to your well-being. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you are experiencing pain.
- Ask your doctor or nurse about medicines that are available to help stop or lessen constipation.
- 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 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 or stop lessen these symptoms.
- Manage tiredness by pacing your activities for the day. Be sure to include periods of rest between energy-draining activities.

Food and Drug Interactions

- There are no known interactions of liposomal cytarabine with other medicines or food.
- 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 100.5 F (38 C) or above

- Chills
- Confusion and/or agitation
- Hallucinations
- Trouble understanding or speaking
- Blurry vision or changes in your eyesight
- Numbness or lack of strength to your arms, legs, face, or body
- Numbness, tingling, or pain your hands and feet
- Headache that does not go away
- No bowel movement in 3 days or when you feel uncomfortable.
- Nausea that stops you from eating or drinking and/or is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Throwing up more than 3 times a day
- Fatigue that interferes with your daily activities
- 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.
- If you think you are pregnant or may have impregnated your partner

Reproduction Warnings

- **Pregnancy warning:** This drug can have harmful effects on the unborn baby. It is recommended that effective methods of birth control should be used by women of child bearing potential during your cancer treatment. 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:** 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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