

pegylated liposomal DOXOrubicin

Pronunciation: PEG-y-late-ted Lip-o-SO-mal Docs-oh-RUBE-i-sin

Other Name(s): Caelyx®

Appearance: Red coloured liquid mixed into larger bags of fluids

This handout gives general information about this cancer medication.

You will learn:

- who to contact for help
- what the medication is
- how it is given
- what to expect while on medication



This handout was created by Ontario Health (Cancer Care Ontario) together with patients and their caregivers who have also gone through cancer treatment. It is meant to help support you through your cancer treatment and answer some of your questions.

This information does not replace the advice of your health care team. Always talk to your health care team about your treatment.

Who do I contact if I have questions or need help?

My cancer health care provider is: _____

During the day I should contact: _____

Evenings, weekends and holidays: _____

What is this treatment for?

Pegylated liposomal doxorubicin is used to treat cancers such as breast, ovary, HIV-positive Kaposi sarcoma, and others

What should I do before I start this treatment?

Tell your health care team if you have or had significant medical condition(s), especially if you have / had:

- liver problems,
- heart problems,
- prior chemotherapy and/or radiation treatment, or
- any allergies.



Remember To:

- ✓ Tell your health care team about all of the other medications you are taking.
- ✓ Keep taking other medications that have been prescribed for you, unless you have been told not to by your health care team.

You will have a blood test to check for hepatitis B before starting treatment. See the [Hepatitis B and Cancer Medications](#) pamphlet for more information.

How is this treatment given?

- This drug is given through an IV (injected into a vein).
- Talk to your health care team about your treatment schedule.
- If you missed your treatment appointment, talk to your health care team to find out what to do.

Other medications you may be given with this treatment

To Prevent Nausea and Vomiting

You may be given medications to prevent or stop nausea (feeling like throwing up) and vomiting (throwing up) before they start. These are called anti-nausea medications.

- Medications to prevent nausea and vomiting before they start include ondansetron (Zofran®), granisetron (Kytril®), or others.

If you already have nausea and/or vomiting, some anti-nausea medication can stop them from getting worse. You may be given these medications to have at home in case you start to feel nausea or if you vomit.

- Medications to stop nausea and vomiting include prochlorperazine (Stemetil®), metoclopramide (Maxeran®), or others.

DO this while on treatment

- ✓ DO check with your health care team before getting any vaccinations, surgery, dental work or other medical procedures.
- ✓ DO talk to your health care team about your risk of getting other cancers and heart problems after this treatment.

DO NOT do this while on treatment



- ✗ DO NOT use tobacco products (such as smoking cigarettes or vaping) or drink alcohol while on treatment without talking to your health care team first. Smoking and drinking can make side effects worse and make your treatment not work as well.
- ✗ DO NOT take any other medications, such as vitamins, over-the-counter (non-prescription) drugs, or natural health products without checking with your health care team.
- ✗ DO NOT start any complementary or alternative therapies, such as acupuncture or homeopathic medications, without checking with your health care team.

Will this treatment interact with other medications or natural health products?

Yes, this medication can interact with other medications, vitamins, foods and natural health products. Interactions can make this medication not work as well or cause severe side effects.

Tell your health care team about all of your:

- prescription and over-the-counter (non-prescription) medications and all other drugs, such as cannabis/marijuana (medical or recreational)
- natural health products such as vitamins, herbal teas, homeopathic medicines, and other supplements

Check with your health care team before starting or stopping any of them.



Talk to your health care team **BEFORE** taking or using these :

- Anti-inflammatory medications such as ibuprofen (Advil® or Motrin®), naproxen (Aleve®) or Aspirin®.
- Over-the-counter products such as dimenhydrinate (Gravol®)
- Natural health products such as St. John's Wort
- Supplements such as vitamin C
- Grapefruit juice
- Alcoholic drinks
- Tobacco
- All other drugs, such as marijuana or cannabis (medical or recreational)

What to do if you feel unwell, have pain, a headache or a fever

- ✓ **Always** check your temperature to see if you have a fever **before** taking any medications for fever or pain (such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®)).
 - Fever can be a sign of infection that may need treatment right away.
 - If you take these medications before you check for fever, they may lower your temperature and you may not know you have an infection.

How to check for fever:

Keep a digital (electronic) thermometer at home and take your temperature if you feel hot or unwell (for example, chills, headache, mild pain).

- You have a fever if your temperature taken **in your mouth (oral temperature)** is:
 - 38.3°C (100.9°F) or higher at any time

OR

 - 38.0°C (100.4°F) or higher for at least one hour.



If you do have a fever:

- ✓ **Try to contact your health care team. If you are not able to talk to them for advice, you MUST get emergency medical help right away.**
- ✓ Ask your health care team for the [Fever](#) pamphlet for more information.

If you do not have a fever but have mild symptoms such as headache or mild pain:

- ✓ Ask your health care team about the right medication for you. **Acetaminophen (Tylenol®)** is a safe choice for most people.



Talk to your health care team before you start taking ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®), naproxen (Aleve®) or ASA (Aspirin®), as they may increase your chance of bleeding or interact with your cancer treatment.



Talk to your health care team if you already take **low dose aspirin** for a medical condition (such as a heart problem). It may still be safe to take.

How will this treatment affect sex, pregnancy and breastfeeding?

Talk to your health care team about:

- How this treatment may affect your sexual health
- How this treatment may affect your ability to have a baby, if this applies to you

This treatment may harm an unborn baby. Tell your health care team if you or your partner are pregnant, become pregnant during treatment, or are breastfeeding.

- If there is **any** chance you may become pregnant, you and your partner together must use **2 effective forms of birth control** at the same time until **8 months** after your last dose. Talk to your health care team about which birth control options are best for you.
- If you are a patient that can get somebody pregnant, you and your partner together must use **2 effective forms of birth control** at the same time until **6 months** after your last dose. Talk to your health care team about which birth control options are best for you.
- Do not breastfeed while on this treatment.

What are the side effects of this treatment?

The following table lists side effects that you may have when getting pegylated liposomal doxorubicin treatment. The table is set up to list the most common side effects first and the least common last. It is unlikely that you will have all of the side effects listed and you may have some that are not listed.

Read over the side effect table so that you know what to look for and when to get help. Refer to this table if you experience any side effects while on pegylated liposomal doxorubicin treatment.

More Common Side Effects	
Side effects and what to do	When to contact health care team
<p>Hand-foot syndrome (pain, thinning or reddening palms or feet, including tingling, numbness, peeling)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid activities that cause rubbing, pressure or heat exposure to hands and feet (i.e. gripping tools, vigorous washing, hot baths). • Apply moisturizer liberally and often to your hands and feet, especially in the creases. • Wear loose, comfortable footwear and clothes. Rest and try to keep off your feet. • Also see Hand-Foot Syndrome pamphlet.* 	Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe
<p>Nausea and vomiting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink clear fluids and avoid large meals. Get fresh air and rest. • Limit spicy, fried foods or foods with a strong smell. • Take anti-nausea drug(s) exactly as directed by your doctor. It is easier to prevent nausea than to treat it. • Contact your doctor if nausea lasts more than 48 hours or vomiting for more than 24 hours. • Also see Nausea & Vomiting pamphlet.* 	Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe
<p>Mouth sores</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain good mouth hygiene. Regular teeth brushing with a soft toothbrush or Toothette®, and regular use of alcohol-free mouthwashes. • Instead, try a homemade mouthwash: Mix 1 teaspoonful of baking soda and 1 teaspoonful of salt in 4 cups (1L) of water. • Avoid hot, spicy, acidic, hard or crunchy foods. • Check with your doctor or nurse as soon as you notice sores in mouth/lips or pain with swallowing. Your doctor may prescribe a prescription mouthwash to relieve mouth sores and prevent infection. • Also see Mouth Care pamphlet.* 	Contact your health care team as soon as possible (office hours)

More Common Side Effects	
Side effects and what to do	When to contact health care team
<p><i>Hair thinning or loss</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a gentle soft brush; care should be taken with hair sprays, bleaches, dyes and perms. • Your hair usually grows back after your treatment ends, but the texture or colour may change. 	Talk to your health care team if this bothers you
<p><i>Tiredness</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rest often; take naps if needed. Move slowly when getting up. • Eat well-balanced meals and drink plenty of fluids. Light exercise may help. • Do not drive a motor vehicle or operate machinery when feeling tired. 	Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe
<p><i>Poor Appetite; don't feel like eating; weight loss</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat foods that you like and try to eat regular small meals. • Use meal supplements if possible. See a dietitian. 	Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe
<p><i>Rash (rarely severe); dry, itchy skin</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay out of the sun; wear sunblock, a hat and cover exposed skin. • Use daily moisturizer. • If severe, get emergency medical help right away. 	Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe
<p><i>Sensitivity reaction (usually the first injection only)</i> (flushing, rash, itchiness, facial swelling, headache, chest or throat tightness)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch for symptoms during and shortly after the infusion <p><i>Allergic reaction is less common</i> (fever, severe rash, itchiness, swollen face, lip or tongue, chest or throat tightness)</p>	Get emergency medical help right away
<p><i>Unusual bleeding or bruising</i></p> <p>You may have black stools, cough up blood, blood in your urine, purple or red dots on your skin or bleeding that will not stop.</p> <p><i>Fever, chills, infection</i></p> <p>You have a fever if your temperature taken in your mouth (oral temperature) is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 38.3°C (100.9°F) or higher at any time OR • 38.0°C (or 100.4°F) or higher for at least one hour. 	Get emergency medical help right away

More Common Side Effects	
Side effects and what to do	When to contact health care team
<p>While you are getting chemotherapy treatments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep a digital thermometer at home and take your temperature if you feel hot or unwell (for example, chills). • Avoid taking medications that treat a fever before you take your temperature (for example, Tylenol®, acetaminophen, Advil® or ibuprofen) as they may hide a fever. • Do not eat or drink anything hot or cold right before taking your temperature. • Wash your hands often. • Check with your doctor before getting any vaccines, surgeries, medical procedures or visiting your dentist. <p>If you have a fever, talk to your health care team or go to the closest emergency room.</p> <p>See our Neutropenia (Low white blood cell count) pamphlet for more information.</p>	

Less Common Side Effects, but may be Severe	
Side effects and what to do	When to contact health care team
Blockage of an artery (blood vessel) in your heart, brain, chest, belly, or limbs; this may result in stroke (sudden loss of vision, speech, or the use of your limb(s)) or heart attack (chest pain, shortness of breath), or pain in chest, belly or limb	Get emergency medical help right away
Heart problems (irregular heartbeat, chest pain, fainting, swelling, shortness of breath)	Get emergency medical help right away
Pain, burning, redness, or swelling on skin where drug was injected <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let your healthcare team know right away when this happens, since this drug can harm or irritate tissues if it leaks from the vein during injection. 	
Blood clot (limb pain or swelling, hardened vein in limb), may occur in lungs (sudden start of coughing, breathing problems, chest pain, coughing blood)	Get emergency medical help right away

For more information on how to manage your symptoms ask your health care provider, or visit:
<https://www.cancercareontario.ca/symptoms>.

Notes

March 2025 Updated drug information sheet to new format

The information set out in the medication information sheets, regimen information sheets, and symptom management information (for patients) contained in the Drug Formulary (the "Formulary") is intended to be used by health professionals and patients for informational purposes only. The information is not intended to cover all possible uses, directions, precautions, drug interactions or side effects of a certain drug, nor should it be used to indicate that use of a particular drug is safe, appropriate or effective for a given condition.

A patient should always consult a healthcare provider if he/she has any questions regarding the information set out in the Formulary. The information in the Formulary is not intended to act as or replace medical advice and should not be relied upon in any such regard. All uses of the Formulary are subject to clinical judgment and actual prescribing patterns may not follow the information provided in the Formulary.