

Medication Information Sheet**nelarabine** (nel AR a been)

This document provides general information about your medication. It does not replace the advice of your health care professional. Always discuss your therapy with your health care professional and refer to the package insert for more details.

Other Name: Atriance®

Appearance: clear, colourless solution

What is this medication for?

For treating certain types of leukemia or lymphoma (blood cancers)

What should I do before I have this medication?

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

- liver, kidney, muscle or muscle problems,
- nervous system problems,
- treatment with other forms of chemotherapy (especially if injected around your spinal cord) or radiation,
- 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 will this medication affect sex, pregnancy and breastfeeding?

Talk to your health care team about:

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

This medication 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 at least **6 months** after your last dose (general recommendation). 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 **3 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 medication.

How is this medication 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.

What else do I need to know while on this medication?

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

- This medication can interact with other medications, vitamins, foods and natural health products. Interactions can make the treatment 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 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.

What should I do if I 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.

What to DO while on this medication:

- DO check with your health care team before getting any vaccinations, surgery, dental work or other medical procedures.
- DO consider asking someone to drive you to and from the hospital on your treatment days. You may feel drowsy, dizzy or confused after your treatment.
- DO tell your health care team if you have any new pain, numbness or tingling of your hands or feet. This is especially important if you are having trouble doing tasks (like doing up buttons, writing, walking) or if you have severe pain or numbness.

What NOT to DO while on this medication:

- DO NOT smoke 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.

What are the side effects of this medication?

The following table lists side effects that you may have when getting nelarabine. 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 nelarabine.

Very Common Side Effects (50 or more out of 100 people)	
Side effects and what to do	When to contact health care team
<p>Low neutrophils (white blood cells) in the blood (neutropenia) (May be severe)</p> <p>When neutrophils are low, you are at risk of getting an infection more easily. Ask your health care team for the Neutropenia (Low white blood cell count) pamphlet for more information.</p> <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you feel hot or unwell (for example if you have chills or a new cough), you must check your temperature to see if you have a fever. • Do not take medications that treat a fever before you take your temperature (for example, Tylenol® (acetaminophen), or Advil® (ibuprofen)). • Do not eat or drink anything hot or cold right before taking your temperature. <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 (100.4°F) or higher for at least one hour. <p>What to do?</p>	<p>If you have a fever, try to contact your health care team. If you are unable to talk to the team for advice, you MUST get emergency medical help right away.</p>

The most updated information sheet version can be found on <https://www.cancercareontario.ca/drugs>
 Additional symptom management information is available from <https://www.cancercareontario.ca/symptoms>
 Created by the CCO Drug Formulary team, with input from the CCO Patient Education team and Patient & Family Advisors.
 February 2024

Very Common Side Effects (50 or more out of 100 people)	
Side effects and what to do	When to contact health care team
<p>If your health care team has told you that you have low neutrophils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash your hands often to prevent infection. • Check with your health care team before getting any vaccines, surgeries, medical procedures or visiting your dentist. • Keep a digital thermometer at home so you can easily check for a fever. <p>If you have a fever:</p> <p>If you have a fever, try to contact your health care team. If you are unable to talk to the team for advice, you must get emergency medical help right away.</p>	
<p>Low platelets in the blood</p> <p>(May be severe)</p> <p>When your platelets are low, you are at risk for bleeding and bruising. Ask your health care team for the Low Platelet Count pamphlet for more information.</p> <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch for signs of bleeding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ bleeding from your gums ◦ unusual or heavy nosebleeds ◦ bruising easily or more than normal ◦ black coloured stools (poo) or blood in your stools (poo) ◦ coughing up red or brown coloured mucus ◦ dizziness, constant headache or changes in your vision ◦ heavy vaginal bleeding <p>What to do?</p> <p>If your health care team has told you that you have low platelets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell your pharmacist that your platelet count may be low before taking any prescriptions or over-the-counter medication. • Check with your healthcare team before you go to the dentist. • Take care of your mouth and use a soft toothbrush. • Try to prevent cuts and bruises. • Ask your health care team what activities are safe for you. • Your treatment may have to be delayed if you have low platelets. Your health care team may recommend a blood transfusion. 	<p>Talk to your health care team if you have any signs of bleeding. If you have bleeding that doesn't stop or is severe (very heavy), you MUST get emergency help right away.</p>

Very Common Side Effects (50 or more out of 100 people)	
Side effects and what to do	When to contact health care team
<p>If you have signs of bleeding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you have a small bleed, clean the area with soap and water or a saline (saltwater) rinse. Apply pressure for at least 10 minutes. <p>If you have bleeding that does not stop or is severe (very heavy), you must get emergency medical help right away.</p>	
<p>Anemia (low red blood cells)</p> <p>(May be severe)</p> <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may feel more tired or weaker than normal. Pale skin and cold hands and feet. You may feel short of breath, dizzy or lightheaded. This may occur in days to weeks after your treatment starts. <p>What to do?</p> <p>If your health care team has told you that you have anemia (low red blood cells):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rest often and eat well. Light exercise, such as walking may help. You may need medication or a blood transfusion. If it is very bad, your doctor may need to make changes to your treatment regimen. 	<p>Talk to your health care team if it does not improve or if it is severe</p>
<p>Fatigue</p> <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeling of tiredness or low energy that lasts a long time and does not go away with rest or sleep. 	<p>Talk to your health care team if it does not improve or if it is severe</p>

Very Common Side Effects (50 or more out of 100 people)	
Side effects and what to do	When to contact health care team
<p>What to do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be active. Aim to get 30 minutes of moderate exercise (you are able to talk comfortably while exercising) on most days. • Check with your health care team before starting any new exercise. • Pace yourself, do not rush. Put off less important activities. Rest when you need to. • Ask family or friends to help you with things like housework, shopping, and child or pet care. • Eat well and drink at least 6 to 8 glasses of water or other liquids every day (unless your health care team has told you to drink more or less). • Avoid driving or using machinery if you are feeling tired. <p>Ask your health care team for the Fatigue pamphlet for more information.</p>	

Common Side Effects (25 to 49 out of 100 people)	
Side effects and what to do	When to contact health care team
<p>Nausea and vomiting</p> <p>(Generally mild)</p> <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nausea is feeling like you need to throw up. You may also feel light-headed. • You may feel nausea within hours to days after your treatment. <p>What to do?</p> <p>To help prevent nausea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is easier to prevent nausea than to treat it once it happens. • If you were given anti-nausea medication(s), take them as prescribed, even if you do not feel like throwing up. • Drink clear liquids and have small meals. Get fresh air and rest. • Do not eat spicy, fried foods or foods with a strong smell. • Limit caffeine (like coffee, tea) and avoid alcohol. 	<p>Talk to your healthcare team if nausea lasts more than 48 hours or vomiting lasts more than 24 hours or if it is severe</p>

Common Side Effects (25 to 49 out of 100 people)	
Side effects and what to do	When to contact health care team
<p>If you have nausea or vomiting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take your rescue (as-needed) anti-nausea medication(s) as prescribed. • Ask your health care team for the Nausea & Vomiting pamphlet for more information. • Talk to your health care team if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ nausea lasts more than 48 hours ◦ vomiting lasts more than 24 hours or if it is severe 	
<p>Cough and feeling short of breath</p> <p>(May be severe)</p> <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may have a cough and feel short of breath. • Symptoms that commonly occur with a cough are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ wheezing or a whistling breathing ◦ runny nose ◦ sore throat ◦ heartburn ◦ weight loss ◦ fever and chills • Rarely this may be severe with chest pain, trouble breathing or coughing up blood. <p>What to do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check your temperature to see if you have a fever. Read the above section "What should I do if I feel unwell, have pain, a headache or a fever?". • If you have a fever, try to talk to your health care team. If you are not able to talk to them for advice, you MUST get emergency medical help right away. • If you have a severe cough with chest pain, trouble breathing or you are coughing up blood, get medical help right away. 	<p>Talk to your health care team. If you are not able to talk to your health care team for advice, and you have a fever or severe symptoms, you MUST get emergency medical help right away</p>

Less Common Side Effects (10 to 24 out of 100 people)	
Side effects and what to do	When to contact health care team
<p>Drowsiness (sleepiness)</p> <p>(May be severe)</p> <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may feel sleepy or tired during the day. You may start to fall asleep at times outside of your normal sleep hours. This may go away as your body adjusts to the medication. <p>What to do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you feel drowsy (sleepy), avoid driving or using heavy machinery. 	<p>Talk to your health care team if it does not improve or if it is severe</p>
<p>Dizziness</p> <p>(May be severe)</p> <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may feel light-headed and like you might faint (pass out). <p>What to do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lay down right away so you do not fall. Slowly get up and start moving once you feel better. Do not drive a motor vehicle or use machinery if you feel dizzy. 	<p>Talk to your health care team if it does not improve or if it is severe</p>
<p>Neuropathy (Tingling, numb toes or fingers)</p> <p>(May be severe)</p> <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbness or tingling of your fingers and toes may happen after starting your treatment. Less sensitivity to touch or pain. It can also happen to other parts of your body. Sometimes it can be painful and feel like a burning sensation, which may be severe. <p>What to do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk to your health care team if you have symptoms of neuropathy. Numbness and tingling may slowly get better after your treatment ends. 	<p>Talk to your health care team, especially if you have trouble doing tasks like doing up buttons, writing, moving, or if you have severe pain or numbness</p>

Less Common Side Effects (10 to 24 out of 100 people)	
Side effects and what to do	When to contact health care team
In rare cases, it may continue long after treatment ends. If you continue to have bothersome symptoms, talk to your health care team for advice.	
<p>Diarrhea</p> <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loose, watery, unformed stool (poo) that may happen days to weeks after you get your treatment. <p>What to do?</p> <p>If you have diarrhea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take anti-diarrhea medication if your health care team prescribed it or told you to take it. Do not eat foods or drinks with artificial sweetener (like chewing gum or 'diet' drinks), coffee and alcohol, until your diarrhea has stopped. Eat many small meals and snacks instead of 2 or 3 large meals. Drink at least 6 to 8 cups of liquids each day, unless your health care team has told you to drink more or less. Talk to your health care team if you can't drink 6 to 8 cups of liquids each day when you have diarrhea. You may need to drink special liquids with salt and sugar, called Oral Rehydration Therapy. Talk to your health care team if your diarrhea does not improve after 24 hours of taking diarrhea medication or if you have diarrhea more than 7 times in one day. <p>Ask your health care team for the Diarrhea pamphlet for more information.</p>	<p>Talk to your health care team if no improvement after 24 hours of taking diarrhea medication or if severe (more than 7 times in one day)</p>
<p>Constipation</p> <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having bowel movements (going poo) less often than normal. Small hard stools (poo) that look like pellets. The need to push hard and strain to have any stool (poo) come out. Stomach ache or cramps. A bloated belly, feeling of fullness, or discomfort. Leaking of watery stools (poo). Lots of gas or burping. Nausea or vomiting. 	<p>Talk to your health care team if it does not improve or if it is severe</p>

Less Common Side Effects (10 to 24 out of 100 people)	
Side effects and what to do	When to contact health care team
<p>What to do?</p> <p>To help prevent constipation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to eat more fiber rich foods like fruits with skin, leafy greens and whole grains. • Drink at least 6 to 8 cups of liquids each day unless your health care team has told you to drink more or less. • Be Active. Exercise can help to keep you regular. • If you take opioid pain medication, ask your health care team if eating more fibre is right for you. <p>To help treat constipation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have not had a bowel movement in 2 to 3 days you may need to take a laxative (medication to help you poo) to help you have regular bowel movements. Ask your health care team what to do. <p>Ask your health care team for the Constipation Pamphlet for more information.</p>	
<p>Mild swelling</p> <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may have mild swelling or puffiness in your arms and/or legs. Rarely, this may be severe. <p>What to do?</p> <p>To help prevent swelling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat a low-salt diet. <p>If you have swelling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear loose-fitting clothing. • For swollen legs or feet, keep your feet up when sitting. 	Talk to your health care team if it does not improve or if it is severe
<p>Headache, mild joint, muscle pain or cramps</p> <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mild headache • New pain in your muscles or joints, muscle cramps, or feeling achy. 	Talk to your health care team if it does not improve or if it is severe

Less Common Side Effects (10 to 24 out of 100 people)	
Side effects and what to do	When to contact health care team
<p>What to do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take pain medication (acetaminophen or opioids such as codeine, morphine, hydromorphone, oxycodone) as prescribed. • Read the above section: "What should I do if I feel unwell, have pain, a headache or a fever?" before taking acetaminophen (Tylenol®), ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®), naproxen (Aleve®) or Aspirin. These medications may hide an infection that needs treatment or they may increase your risk of bleeding. • Rest often and try light exercise (such as walking) as it may help. <p>Ask your health care team for the Pain pamphlet for more information.</p> <p>If you have a sudden, severe headache get emergency medical help right away.</p>	

Other rare, but serious side effects are possible.

If you experience ANY of the following, speak to your cancer health care provider or get emergency medical help right away:

- Confusion, fainting, seizure
- Noticeable difficulty remembering things, thinking, speaking, understanding what others say, with movement or balance
- New weakness in your arms or legs
- Sudden changes in your hearing, vision, smell or taste
- Problems urinating (peeing) such as urinating less than usual, or problems having bowel movements; Dark red or brown-coloured pee
- Severe pain in your muscles, arms or legs
- Itchiness that won't go away
- Muscle twitches or cramps that won't go away
- Yellowish skin or eyes, unusually dark pee or new pain on the right side of your belly
- Weight gain that is not normal for you
- Fast or irregular heartbeat

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: _____

Other Notes:

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For more links on how to manage your symptoms go to www.cancercareontario.ca/symptoms.

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.