

## Medication Information Sheet

**pegaspargase** (peg-AS-par-gase)

*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:** Oncaspar®

**Appearance:** Clear solution for injection; may be mixed into larger bags of fluids

**What is this medication for?**

- Used in combination with other cancer drugs for treating certain types of blood cancers (such as Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia) or lymphomas.

**What should I do before I have this medication?**

- Tell your doctor if you have/had significant medical condition(s), especially if you have / had:
  - ◊ blood clots or bleeding problems,
  - ◊ diabetes,
  - ◊ problems with your kidney, liver or pancreas,
  - ◊ or any allergies (or if you cannot tolerate asparaginase)

**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.

**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 of pregnancy happening, 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 treatment dose. Talk to your health care team about which birth control options are best for you.

- This medication may make hormonal birth control, such as birth control pills, less effective (not work as well). If you choose to use a hormonal birth control, make sure you also use a barrier or non-hormonal birth control method (such as condoms). Talk to your health care team about the best birth control options for you.
- Do not breastfeed while on this medication.

## How is this medication given?

- This drug is given by injection into a muscle or 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.

### To Prevent Allergic Reaction

You may be given medications before your treatment to help prevent allergic reactions before they start.

There are different types of medications to stop allergic reactions. They are called:

- antihistamines (such as diphenhydramine or Benadryl®)
- analgesics/antipyretics (such as acetaminophen or Tylenol®)
- H2 blockers (such as ranitidine or famotidine)
- corticosteroids (such as prednisone)

### To Prevent Tumor Lysis Syndrome (TLS)

TLS can happen when a large number of cancer cells die quickly and your body cannot get rid of them fast enough. TLS can make you very sick. Ask your health care team if you are at risk for TLS.

If you are at risk for TLS, you may be given medications before your pegaspargase treatment to help prevent it.

These are called anti-uricemics (such as allopurinol), or others.

## 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 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.
  
- **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 or dizzy after your treatment.

**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 pegaspargase. 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 pegaspargase.

Side Effects (in 10 or more out of 100 people)	
Side effects and what to do	When to contact health care team
<p><b>Liver problems</b></p> <p>Your health care team may check your liver function with a blood test. Liver changes do not usually cause any symptoms.</p> <p><b>What to look for?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rarely, you may develop yellowish skin or eyes, unusually dark pee or pain on the right side of your belly. This may be severe.</li> </ul> <p><b>What to do?</b></p> <p><b>If you have any symptoms of liver problems, get emergency medical help right away.</b></p>	<p>Get emergency medical help right away</p>
<p><b>Pains or cramps in the belly</b></p> <p><b>What to look for?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pain or cramps in your belly.</li> <li>• Constipation and diarrhea can cause pain in your belly.</li> </ul> <p><b>What to do?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the pain is severe, gets worse or doesn't go away, talk to your health care team about other possible causes.</li> </ul>	<p>Talk to your health care team if it does not improve or if it is severe</p>
<p><b>Diarrhea</b></p> <p><b>What to look for?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loose, watery, unformed stool (poo) that may happen days to weeks after you get your treatment.</li> </ul> <p><b>What to do?</b></p> <p><b>If you have diarrhea:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take anti-diarrhea medication if your health care team prescribed it or told you to take it.</li> </ul>	<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>

<b>Side Effects (in 10 or more out of 100 people)</b>	
<b>Side effects and what to do</b>	<b>When to contact health care team</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not eat foods or drinks with artificial sweetener (like chewing gum or 'diet' drinks), coffee and alcohol.</li> <li>• Eat many small meals and snacks instead of 2 or 3 large meals.</li> <li>• Drink at least 6 to 8 cups of liquids each day, unless your health care team has told you to drink more or less.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul> <p>Ask your health care team for the <a href="#">Diarrhea</a> pamphlet for more information.</p>	
<p><b>High blood sugar</b></p> <p><b>What to look for?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You may feel thirsty.</li> <li>• You may pee more often than usual.</li> <li>• You may feel tired or sleepy.</li> </ul> <p><b>What to do?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your health care team may do a blood test to check your blood sugar level.</li> <li>• You may be told to change your diet or given medication to lower your blood sugar.</li> <li>• If you have diabetes, check your blood sugar regularly. Your health care team may ask you to check it more often than usual.</li> </ul>	Contact your health care team as soon as possible (office hours)
<p><b>Higher than normal levels of pancreas enzymes in your blood (lipase, amylase)</b></p> <p><b>What to look for?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These changes usually do not cause any symptoms.</li> <li>• In some cases, you may feel pain in the centre of your belly that may spread to your back.</li> </ul> <p><b>What to do?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your health care team may do blood tests to watch your levels of enzymes in the pancreas.</li> </ul>	Talk to your health care team if you have any symptoms. If you are unable to talk to the team for advice, you must get emergency medical help right away.

Side Effects (in 10 or more out of 100 people)	
Side effects and what to do	When to contact health care team
<b>If you have any symptoms, get emergency medical help right away.</b>	
<p><b>Allergic reaction</b></p> <p><b>What to look for?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever, itchiness, rash, swollen lips, face or tongue, chest and throat tightness.</li> <li>• It may happen during or shortly after your treatment is given to you and may be severe.</li> </ul> <p><b>What to do?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell your nurse right away if you feel any signs of allergic reaction during or just after your treatment.</li> <li>• Talk to your health care team for advice if you have a mild skin reaction.</li> </ul>	<p>Get emergency medical help right away for severe symptoms</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:**

- have signs of infection (for example, feeling unwell, new cough) or fever. 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
- black coloured stools (poo) or blood in your stools (poo), heavy vaginal bleeding, red or pink coloured urine (pee) or bleeding that will not stop
- feeling confused
- suddenly losing your vision, having trouble speaking or using your arms or legs
- chest pain
- trouble breathing, coughing up blood
- pain, swelling and hardening of the vein in an arm or leg
- severe headache, passing out (fainting)
- seizures
- hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that aren't there)
- severe numbness, tingling, or burning sensation of fingers, toes or other parts of the body, having pain or trouble moving





For more links on how to manage your symptoms go to [www.cancercareontario.ca/symptoms](http://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.*