

Medication Information Sheet

riTUXimab (subcut) for injection under the skin

(rit-TUCKS-ee-mab)

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: Rituxan® SC

Appearance: Clear, colourless to yellowish solution

What is this medication for?

- For treating blood cancers such as non-Hodgkin's lymphoma or chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL)

What should I do before I have this medication?

- Tell your doctor if you have or had significant medical condition(s) such as:
 - kidney or liver disease (including hepatitis),
 - lung disease (including tuberculosis),
 - heart problems or stroke, or
 - any allergies.
- It is important to tell your doctor if you are taking any other medications. If you take medications to lower your blood pressure, you may need to hold the dose before your treatment visit; check with your health care team before you come for treatment.
- Your doctor may test your blood for exposure to the hepatitis B virus before starting treatment.
- People with cancer have a higher risk of getting other cancers or developing blood clots. Some cancer medications may increase these risks, especially if used for a long period of time. Discuss any concerns about this medication with your health care team.

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 of pregnancy happening, you and your partner together must use **2 effective forms of birth control** at the same time until **12 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 and for **6 months** after the last dose.

How is this medication given?

- Your first dose of rituximab will be given into a vein (IV).
- If you have completed a full IV dose before, you may get your next doses injected by a needle into your skin. It takes less time to give this injection to you than the IV one.
- You may be given drug(s) before your riTUXimab dose to prevent a reaction.

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

- This medication can interact with other medications and can result in the treatment not working as well or cause severe side effects.
- Make sure your health care team knows about all your medications (prescription, over-the-counter, herbals and supplements). Check with your health care team before starting or stopping any of them.
- **For mild aches and pain or fever:**
 - If you feel unwell, take your temperature before taking any medications for pain or fever. They may hide a fever.
 - You may take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) tablets. Ask your health care team about the right dose for you.
 - Ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®), naproxen (Aleve®) or aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid, ASA), including low dose aspirin for heart conditions, may increase your chance of bleeding. Talk to your health care team before you start or stop these medications.

- **Talk to your health care team or go to the closest emergency room right away if you have a fever.** See the [Fever](#) pamphlet for more information.
- Drinking alcohol and smoking during your treatment may increase some side effects and make your medication less effective. Speak to your health care team about smoking and drinking alcohol while on treatment.

What are the side effects of this medication?

The following table lists side effects that you may have when getting rituximab (subcut). 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 rituximab (subcut).

Side effects and what to do	When to contact doctor?
Common Side Effects (in 25 to 49 out of 100 people)	
Drug-related reaction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May happen during or after the treatment is given. Usually occurs during the first and second doses. • Reactions at the injection site: Watch for pain, redness, itchiness, bruising or bleeding, mild rash and/or swelling. Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe. • Other drug-related reaction symptoms may include fever, chills, dry mouth, muscle pain, tiredness, nausea or vomiting. • These may rarely be severe (itchiness and/or rash, dizziness, flushing, swollen lips, face or tongue; chest and throat tightness). • Let your health care team know right away if this happens to you during or shortly after the drug is given. 	--
Fever, chills, infection (includes less common infections that happen when the immune system is weakened, such as viral infections) <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. <p>While you are getting treatment:</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). 	Get emergency medical help right away

Side effects and what to do	When to contact doctor?
Common Side Effects (in 25 to 49 out of 100 people)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 to prevent infection. • 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> <p>Low platelets in the blood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch for bleeding (such as unusual nosebleeds or bleeding from the gums) or bruising easily (this is rare). • Very rarely, severe symptoms can happen. If you notice black coloured stools (poo), red or pink coloured urine (pee), red or brown coloured mucus when you cough, severe headache/confusion or bleeding that will not stop, you need to talk to your health care team or go to the nearest emergency room right away. <p>See the Low Platelet Count pamphlet for more information.</p>	

Side effects and what to do	When to contact doctor?
Less Common Side Effects (in 10 to 24 out of 100 people)	
<p>Fatigue (tiredness)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be active and 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. • Eat well and stay hydrated by drinking at least 6 to 8 glasses of water or other liquids every day (unless your doctor told you to drink more or less). • Avoid driving or using machinery if you are feeling tired. • See our Fatigue pamphlet for more information. 	<p>Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe</p>

Side effects and what to do	When to contact doctor?
Less Common Side Effects (in 10 to 24 out of 100 people)	
<p>Nausea and vomiting (generally mild)</p> <p>May occur in hours to days after your treatment.</p> <p>If you have nausea or vomiting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take anti-nausea medication(s) as prescribed to you by your doctor. • 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 (e.g. coffee, tea) and alcohol. • Contact your health care team if the prescribed anti-nausea medications are not helping to control your nausea and vomiting. <p>Also see Nausea & Vomiting pamphlet for more information.</p>	<p>Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe</p>
<p>Tingling, numb fingers and toes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May slowly get better after your treatment ends. • Contact your health care team if you have trouble doing up buttons, writing, picking up small objects, have pain or trouble moving. 	<p>Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe</p>
<p>Headache; mild joint, muscle pain or cramps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take your pain medication as prescribed by your doctor. • You can take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) tablets as needed for mild aches and pains. Ask your doctor or pharmacist about the right dose for you. • Talk to your doctor or pharmacist first before taking ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®), naproxen (Aleve®) or aspirin. These medication may increase bleeding risk. • Rest often and try light exercise as it may help. 	<p>Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe</p>
<p>Flu-like symptoms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may have fever, chills and muscle pain without any signs of infection, such as a sore throat, cough or skin rash. • It may happen at any time after you receive your treatment and it usually goes away as your body gets used to the medication. • Check your temperature to make sure you don't have a fever. If you do not have a fever, you may take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) tablets to help you feel better. Ask your health care team for the correct dose for you. If you do have a fever, speak to your health care team or go to the nearest emergency room. 	<p>Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe</p>

Side effects and what to do	When to contact doctor?
Less Common Side Effects (in 10 to 24 out of 100 people)	
Rash; dry, itchy skin Rash may be severe in some rare cases and cause your skin to blister or peel. If this happens, get emergency medical help right away. To prevent and treat dry skin, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use skin moisturizer. • Protect your skin from the sun and the cold. • Use sunscreen with UVA and UVB protection and a SPF of at least 30. 	Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe
Low blood pressure; dizziness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It may happen when the medication is being given to you. Let your healthcare team know right away if it occurs. • If you feel dizzy or unwell you should lay down to avoid falling. Try to get up and move slowly once you feel better. • Do not drive a motor vehicle or operate machinery if you feel dizzy. 	Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe

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:

- Irregular heartbeat, chest pain, fainting, swelling
- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, coughing up blood
- Pain, swelling or hardening of a vein in your arm or leg
- Trouble with speaking, moving, memory, problems with your vision, severe headaches or seizure
- Sudden, severe belly pain or bloating
- Signs of kidney problems such as lower back pain, body swelling, passing little or no urine, or recent unusual weight gain
- Muscle cramps, twitches, unusual weakness, fainting, feeling confused or restless
- Yellowish skin and eyes, red-brown coloured pee

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:

October 2023 Updated " How will this medication affect sex, pregnancy and breastfeeding" section

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.