

Denileukin diftitox (Ontak®)

What is Denileukin diftitox?

Denileukin diftitox is a medication used to treat T-cell lymphoma of the skin. It is a combination of interleukin 2 (IL-2) and diphtheria toxin. It binds to specific receptors and releases the toxin inside the cells, causing them to die.

How will I receive Denileukin diftitox?

Denileukin diftitox is given as an infusion into your vein. You may be given medications just prior to the infusion to prevent or lessen side effects related to the infusion. You will be monitored closely for allergic and infusion-related reactions.

What are the common side effects?

Please see, “Managing Symptoms at Home”, in the manual and refer to the Symptom Management section.

What May You Expect?	What Should You Do?
Infusion-related reactions such as fever, rash, chills, difficulty breathing, chest pain, decreased blood pressure, and body aches may occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell your nurse or doctor immediately if you have a reaction during your infusion. • The nurse may decrease the rate that the medication is being infused or give you other medications to treat the reaction.
Decreased white blood counts will occur. You may develop infections more easily. Your health care providers will test your blood frequently to monitor your blood counts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report any signs of infection or fever.
Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea may occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will be given medications to help you better tolerate these side effects. It is easier to prevent nausea than treat it once it has occurred. • Drink plenty of liquids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts.

These are the most common side effects. Others may occur. Please report any problems to your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse.

Call and Seek Help Immediately If You Have:

- Signs of an allergic reaction such as rash, itching, difficulty breathing.
- Signs of an infection such as fever or chills.

Contact Your Nurse or Doctor If You Have:

- Uncontrolled nausea or vomiting.
- Aching calf, thigh, or chest pain.
- Yellowing skin or eyes.

Special Instructions

Use birth control while receiving chemotherapy. Women should not become pregnant or breastfeed while being treated with Denileukin diftitox. Talk to your doctor or nurse about any additional questions.

Tell your doctor if you have heart or lung disease. This drug can cause changes in your blood pressure or heartbeat. It can also make the protein level go down in your blood, causing leakage of fluid into your lungs.

Drug-Drug Interactions

None known at this time. However, be sure to inform your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you are taking medication to lower your blood pressure or any other medication. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start taking any new drugs.

Drug-Food Interactions

None known at this time.

For more complete information please request an additional teaching sheet from the National Library of Medicine at www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginformation.html , your nurse, or visit the Resource Center.