

Etoposide (VePesid®, VP-16®)

What is Etoposide?

Etoposide is a chemotherapy agent that stops the growth of cancer cells in your body.

How will I receive Etoposide?

Etoposide is given as an injection into your vein over 2 to 4 hours. It can also be given orally once daily or in divided doses in the form of a capsule. Etoposide is given alone or in combination with other drugs.

What are the common side effects?

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

| What You May Expect? | What Should You Do? |
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| Decreased blood counts (lowered platelets, red and white blood cells) may occur. You may feel weak and tired. You may develop infections more easily and may bruise or bleed 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 such as fever, chills, weakness, tiredness, unusual bleeding or bruising. • Avoid crowds and people with colds, flu, or other infections. • Maintain good mouth care to prevent infections. |
| Nausea and vomiting may occur, although many people will have no nausea. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will be given medications to help you tolerate prevent or decrease 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. |
| You may experience a metallic taste in your mouth and a loss of appetite. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to eat small meals or snacks more frequently throughout the day. |
| Hair loss, thinning or a change in the texture of your hair may occur after 2 to 3 weeks of treatment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your hair will grow once your etoposide treatment is finished. |
| Low blood pressure (high dose), dizziness, lightheadedness, or feeling faint. You may be given additional hydration through the veins as needed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform your physician if you feel dizzy, faint, or lightheaded. |

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 infection such as fever, chills, cough, pain or burning when you urinate.
- Signs of uncontrolled bleeding such as black tarry stools, blood in the urine or severe bruising.
- Wheezing or trouble breathing.
- Painful mouth sores that keep you from drinking liquids.

Special Instructions

Inform your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse of any other medications you are currently taking, as well as any other medical conditions. Please report to your doctor if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. Use birth control when receiving chemotherapy. Talk to your doctor or nurse about any additional questions.

Drug-Drug Interactions

Avoid aspirin and aspirin containing medications (such as some cold medicines) unless you have talked to your doctor. You should talk to your physician, nurse, or pharmacist before getting any vaccines. Receiving live vaccines while you have low blood counts can increase your chances of getting the infection that the vaccines were meant to prevent. Medications such as aprepitant (Emend), Cyclosporine (Sandimmune, Neoral, Gengraf), herbal agents such as St. John's Wort, or supplements such as Glucosamine may interact with etoposide. Tell your doctor if you are taking these or any other medications. Check with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist before starting any new medications.

Drug-Food Interactions

You should avoid drinking alcohol while on etoposide. Grapefruit juice may decrease the effectiveness of Etoposide. It is best to avoid grapefruit juice and grapefruit containing products while you are receiving etoposide.

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, pharmacist, or visit the Resource Center.