Bevacizumab
Avastin

This handout explains the drug bevacizumab, which is used to treat cancer. It includes common side effects and what to do when they occur.

What is bevacizumab?
Bevacizumab is a drug used to treat cancer. It is a monoclonal antibody that targets cancer cells and causes them to die. But, it can also affect some normal cells and cause side effects.
The drug is pronounced “be va SIZ you mab.” One brand of the drug is called Avastin.

How will I receive bevacizumab?
Bevacizumab is given as an infusion through an intravenous (IV) line into a vein in your arm.

On the day of your infusion:

- Arrive at UW Medical Center at least 90 minutes before your infusion appointment.

- Check in at Admitting on the main (3rd) floor of the hospital. The Admitting window is to the right behind the Information Desk. After checking in at Admitting:
  - If you do not have a central line, go to the Outpatient Lab on the main floor of the hospital. There you will give a urine sample and have blood drawn. After that, go to the 8-Southeast Infusion Center for your infusion.
  - If you do have a central line, go to the 8-Southeast Infusion Center. You will have your labs done there and then start your infusion.

- Plan on being in the Infusion Center for at least 1 hour for the infusion process.

Ask your nurse if you have any questions about your infusion.
If you want to have your labs done at a lab closer to your home 1 to 2 days before your infusion, call the Alvord Brain Tumor Center Nurse Line at 206.598.9467. The nurse you speak with will help coordinate this for you.

**What side effects can I expect?**

The table below shows common side effects that can occur with bevacizumab treatments, and what to do about them. Other side effects may also occur. Please report any symptoms to your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Side Effects</th>
<th>What to Do</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Reactions during first infusion:</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Chills, fever <em>(common)</em></td>
<td>Tell your nurse or doctor <strong>right away</strong> if you have a reaction during your first infusion. The nurse may slow down the infusion or give you other medicines to treat the reaction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Nausea, vomiting, pain, shivering, low blood pressure, shortness of breath <em>(less common)</em></td>
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<td><em>These reactions are rare with later infusions.</em></td>
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<td>• Nosebleeds</td>
<td>Sit with your head tilted slightly forward. Lightly pinch the bridge of your nose with your thumb and forefinger. Apply ice. Call your doctor if the bleeding does not stop after 10 to 15 minutes, or if you feel dizzy or faint.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• High blood pressure</td>
<td>Tell your doctor if you have had high blood pressure in the past. You may need to check your blood pressure at home.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Decreased blood counts, lower white blood cells</td>
<td>Tell your doctor if you have signs of infection, fever, unusual bleeding or bruising. Your providers will test your blood often to monitor your blood counts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Feeling weak and tired</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Get infections and bruise more easily</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Slow wound healing or problems with healing</td>
<td>Do <strong>not</strong> have surgery or dental procedures for 28 days before or after you have bevacizumab treatments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Too much protein in your urine <em>(proteinuria)</em></td>
<td>Your doctor will check your urine at your usual visits.</td>
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For Your Safety
Tell your doctor and nurse if you have a history of:

- Cerebral infarction
- Transient ischemic attacks (TIAs)
- Myocardial infarctions (MI)
- Angina

For Women
Bevacizumab can harm a growing baby. To avoid problems:

- Tell your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- Use birth control when receiving bevacizumab treatments.

When to Call
For Urgent Care
Call right away if you have:

- Face swelling or breathing problems – signs of allergic reaction
- Black tarry stools, coughing up blood, vomit that looks like coffee grounds – signs that your bowel may be perforated (have holes), which is life-threatening
- Pain in your abdomen
- Pain and swelling in your lower legs
- A lightheaded or faint feeling
- Sudden or severe headache
- Problems with vision, speech, or walking
- Decrease in how much or how often you urinate (pee)

For Regular Care
Call your nurse or doctor if you have:

- Diarrhea
- Loss of appetite
- Fever, chills
- Cough, sore throat, body aches
- Nosebleed
- Pain
• Sores or white patches on your lips, mouth, or in your throat
• Feelings of being tired or weak

**Is there anything I should avoid during treatment?**

**Food and Drug Interactions**
At this time, we do not know of any foods or other drugs that cause problems when taken with bevacizumab.

**Birth Control (Contraception)**
• Women will have a pregnancy test done and a blood draw before starting therapy.

• While taking bevacizumab:
  - Women should not become pregnant or breastfeed.
  - Men should not get a partner pregnant.
  - Men and women of childbearing age should use contraception during therapy and for at least 1 month taking after your dose.
  - Men and women should use a barrier form of birth control for 48 hours after dose, since the drug is found in bodily fluids during that time.

**Vaccines**
While you are taking bevacizumab:
• Do **not** receive live vaccines.
• Avoid contact with anyone who has received a live vaccine within the last 6 weeks.
• Talk with your provider **before** getting vaccinated.

**To Learn More**
To learn more about bevacizumab:
• Ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist
• Visit the Health Information Resource Center in the 3rd floor lobby at UWMC
• Visit the Medline Plus page on bevacizumab:  
  [https://medlineplus.gov/druginfo/meds/a607001.html](https://medlineplus.gov/druginfo/meds/a607001.html)

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