

Vincristine Sulfate Injection

Vincristine Sulfate

Consumer Medicine Information

What is in this leaflet

This leaflet answers some common questions about Vincristine Sulfate Injection. It does not contain all the available information. It does not take the place of talking to your doctor or pharmacist.

All medicines have benefits and risks. Your doctor has weighed the risks of you taking Vincristine Sulfate Injection against the benefits this medicine is expected to have for you.

This medicine is likely to be used while you are at the clinic or in hospital. If possible, please read this leaflet carefully before this medicine is given to you. In some cases this leaflet may be given to you after the medicine has been used.

If you have any concerns about taking this medicine, ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

Keep this leaflet.

You may need to read it again.

What Vincristine Sulfate Injection is used for

Vincristine sulfate belongs to a group of anticancer medicines called Vinca alkaloids. It is used for the treatment of various cancers. Vincristine stops the cancer cells growing and eventually kills them.

Before you are given Vincristine Sulfate Injection

When you must not be given it

Do not use Vincristine Sulfate Injection if:

- you have an allergy to vincristine or any of the ingredients listed at the end of this leaflet
- you have an allergy to any of the Vinca Alkaloids medicines eg Vinblastine and Vindesine
- you suffer from Charcot-Marie-Tooth-Syndrome. This is a type of hereditary nerve disease.
- you are receiving or have received radiation therapy

If you are not sure whether any of these apply to you, check with your doctor.

Before you are given it

Tell your doctor if:

1. **you have any allergies to:**
 - any other medicine
 - any other substances, such as foods, preservatives or dyes
2. **you are pregnant or intend to become pregnant**
3. **you are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed**
4. **you have or have had any medical conditions, especially the following:**
 - Gout
 - Kidney stones
 - Any infections
 - Liver disease or jaundice
 - Nerve or muscle disease.

Taking other medicines

Tell your doctor if you are taking any other medicines, including any that you

buy without a prescription from your pharmacy, supermarket or health food shop.

Some medicines and vincristine may interfere with each other. These include:

- Medicines to treat gout eg. allopurinol
- Medicines to treat fungal infections eg. itraconazole and voriconazole
- Heart medicines eg. nifedipine
- Phenytoin, a medicine used to prevent seizures, fits or epilepsy
- Vaccines
- Medicines used to treat infections eg. isoniazid, ciprofloxacin, norfloxacin and ofloxacin
- Any other anti-cancer medicines eg. methotrexate, doxorubicin, asparaginase and mitomycin-C.

In some cases, two different medicines may be used together by your doctor even if an interaction might occur. In these cases, your doctor may change your dose.

Do not have any vaccinations (immunisations) without your doctor's approval while you are being treated with vincristine, and for up to 12 months after you stop treatment with it.

Vincristine may lower your body's resistance to infection and there is a chance that you may get the infection the immunisation is meant to prevent.

In addition, other people living in your household should not take oral polio vaccine (sabin) since there is a chance they could pass the polio virus on to you.

Your doctor will advise you about continuing to take other medicines while you are receiving Vincristine Sulfate Injection.

How Vincristine Sulfate Injection is given

This medicine is given as a slow injection into a vein. Sometimes, it is diluted and given as a long injection. Vincristine Sulfate Injection must only be given by a doctor or nurse.

Your doctor will decide what dose, how often and how long you will receive it. This depends on your condition and other factors, such as your weight, age, blood tests, how well your liver is working, and whether or not other medicines are being given at the same time.

If you are given too much (overdose)

This rarely happens as Vincristine Sulfate Injection is administered under the care of a highly trained doctor.

However, if you are given too much vincristine, you may experience some of the effects listed under "Side Effects" below.

Your doctor has information on how to recognise and treat an overdose. Ask your doctor if you have any concerns.

While You Are Being Given Vincristine Sulfate Injection

Things you MUST do:

Vincristine Sulfate Injection can temporarily lower the number of white

blood cells in your blood, increasing the chance of you getting an infection. It can also lower the number of platelets, which are necessary for proper blood clotting. If this occurs, there are certain precautions you can take, especially when your blood count is low, to reduce the risk of infection or bleeding:

- If you can, avoid people with infections. Check with your doctor immediately if you think you are getting an infection, or if you get a fever or chills, cough or hoarseness, lower back or side pain, or painful or difficult urination.
- Check with your doctor immediately if you notice any unusual bleeding or bruising, black stools, blood in urine or stools or pinpoint red spots on your skin.
- Be careful when using a regular toothbrush, dental floss or toothpick. Your doctor or nurse may recommend other ways to clean your teeth and gums.
- Check with your doctor before having any dental work done.
- Do not touch your eyes or the inside of your nose unless you have just washed your hands and have not touched anything else in the meantime.
- Be careful not to cut yourself when you are using sharp objects such as a safety razor or fingernail or toenail cutters.
- Avoid contact sports or other situations where bruising or injury could occur.
- Be sure to keep all of your doctors' appointments so that your progress can be checked.
- If you become pregnant while under vincristine treatment, tell your doctor immediately.

Things you MUST NOT do:

- Do not have any immunisations or vaccinations without your doctor's approval and for up to 12 months after you stopped treatment with it.

Side effects

Tell your doctor or nurse as soon as possible if you do not feel well while you are using vincristine.

Like other medicines, vincristine can cause some side effects. If they occur, most are likely to be minor or temporary. However, some may be serious and need medical attention.

Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist to answer any questions that you may have.

Do not be alarmed by this list of possible side effects. You may not experience any of them.

Tell your doctor immediately if you notice any of the following:

These are serious side effects. You may need urgent medical attention. Serious side effects are rare.

- **Pain or redness at place of injection**
- **Allergies**
An allergy may appear as an itchy rash, high temperature after the injection, swelling of the face, lips, tongue or throat and/or difficulty in breathing.

- **Effects on nerves and muscles**
Vincristine sometimes affects nerves in the hands and feet. This may appear as numbness, tingling, pain or weakness in the fingertips. Other symptoms are loss of muscle control and reflexes, jaw pain, back pain, arm and leg pain, face pain, fits and coma.
- **Bleeding disorders**
Symptoms to look for are black, tarry stools; or blood in stools or urine; pinpoint red spots on skin and any unusual bleeding or bruising.
- **Infection**
Symptoms to look for are fever, chills, cough, hoarseness, sore throat and mouth ulcers.

Check with your doctor or nurse as soon as possible if any of the following side effects occur:

- dizzy or light-headed when getting up from lying or sitting position
- headache
- loss of feeling, hearing or taste
- tingling or burning sensation
- depression or agitation
- eye sight problems: blurred or double vision, temporary blindness
- trouble in sleeping, depression, nervousness, hallucinations and personality changes
- unusual perspiration
- increased frequency, difficulty or pain in passing urine, or incontinence
- impotence or reduced sexual drive
- constipation or cramps
- hair loss
- diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite and weight loss
- inflamed gums or mouth ulcers
- muscle wasting
- jaw or throat pain
- bone, limb or back pain
- muscle aches
- increase in sunburn

Other side effects not listed above may also occur in some patients. If you notice any other effects, check with your doctor. Some side effects may only be seen by your doctor.

Product Description

What it looks like

Vincristine Sulfate Injection is a clear, colourless solution in a plastic vial.

AUST R 48055 Vincristine Sulfate Injection
2mg in 2mL (sterile) Plastic Vial

Ingredients

Vincristine Sulfate Injection contains Vincristine Sulfate, Mannitol and Water for Injections. It does not contain a preservative.

Supplier:

Vincristine is supplied in Australia by:

Pfizer Australia Pty Ltd
ABN 50 008 422 348
38-42 Wharf Road
West Ryde NSW 2114
Toll Free number: 1800 675 229

This Consumer Medicine Information was written in August 1998.

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