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Fluorouracil (systemic): Patient drug information

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(For additional information [see "Fluorouracil \(systemic\): Drug information"](#) and [see "Fluorouracil \(systemic\): Pediatric drug information"](#))

Brand Names: US Adrucil

Brand Names: Canada Fluorouracil Injection

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat colorectal cancer.
- It is used to treat breast cancer.
- It is used to treat stomach cancer.
- It is used to treat pancreatic cancer.
- It may be given to you for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

- If you have an allergy to fluorouracil or any other part of this drug.
- If you are allergic to any drugs like this one, any other drugs, foods, or other substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had, like rash; hives; itching; shortness of breath; wheezing; cough; swelling of face, lips, tongue, or throat; or any other signs.
- If you have any of these health problems: An infection, low blood cell counts, or poor diet.
- If you are breast-feeding. Do not breast-feed while you take this drug.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.

- You may have more chance of getting an infection. Wash hands often. Stay away from people with infections, colds, or flu.
- You may bleed more easily. Be careful and avoid injury. Use a soft toothbrush and an electric razor.
- If you have upset stomach, throwing up, loose stools (diarrhea), or are not hungry, talk with your doctor. There may be ways to lower these side effects.
- If loose stools (diarrhea) or throwing up happens, you will need to make sure to avoid dehydration and electrolyte problems. Talk with the doctor.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- The chance of very bad and sometimes deadly side effects is raised in patients who do not have the enzyme dihydropyrimidine dehydrogenase (DPD) in the body. These include mouth irritation or sores, loose stools (diarrhea), low white blood cell counts, or nerve problems. Talk with the doctor.
- This drug may cause heart problems like heart attack, heart failure, and an abnormal heartbeat. These effects may be more common in people who have had heart disease before. Talk with the doctor.
- If you are taking warfarin, talk with your doctor. You may need to have your blood work checked more closely while you are taking it with this drug.
- Talk with your doctor before getting any vaccines. Use with this drug may either raise the chance of an infection or make the vaccine not work as well.
- You may get sunburned more easily. Avoid sun, sunlamps, and tanning beds. Use sunscreen and wear clothing and eyewear that protects you from the sun.
- This drug may affect fertility. Fertility problems may lead to not being able to get pregnant or father a child. Talk with the doctor.
- If you are a man and have sex with a female who could get pregnant, protect her from pregnancy during care and for 3 months after care ends. Use birth control that you can trust.
- If you are a man and your sex partner gets pregnant while you take this drug or within 3 months after your last dose, call your doctor right away.
- This drug may cause harm to the unborn baby if you take it while you are pregnant.
- Use birth control that you can trust to prevent pregnancy while taking this drug and for 3 months after care ends.
- If you get pregnant while taking this drug or within 3 months after your last dose, call your doctor right away.

What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?

WARNING/CAUTION: Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Chest pain or pressure.
- Shortness of breath, a big weight gain, or swelling in the arms or legs.
- A heartbeat that does not feel normal.
- Dizziness or passing out.
- Black, tarry, or bloody stools.

- Throwing up blood or throw up that looks like coffee grounds.
- Very bad belly pain.
- Very upset stomach or throwing up.
- Very loose stools (diarrhea).
- Very bad mouth irritation.
- Change in eyesight.
- If bright lights bother your eyes.
- Redness or irritation of the palms of hands or soles of feet.
- Swelling in the feet or hands.
- Feeling confused.
- Change in balance.
- Feeling very sleepy.
- A burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.
- Not able to control eye movements.
- Headache.
- This drug may irritate the vein. It may burn the skin if the drug leaks from the vein when it is given. Tell your nurse if you have any redness, burning, pain, swelling, or leaking of fluid where the drug is going into your body.
- This drug may lower the ability of your bone marrow to make blood cells that your body needs. This can lead to very bad and sometimes deadly bleeding problems or infections. Tell your doctor right away if you have signs of infection like fever, chills, very bad sore throat, ear or sinus pain, cough, more sputum or change in color of sputum, pain with passing urine, mouth sores, a wound that will not heal; any bruising or bleeding; or if you feel very tired or weak.

What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Not hungry.
- Loose stools (diarrhea).
- Mouth irritation or mouth sores.
- Hair loss.
- Dry skin.
- Change in nails.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions

closely.

- It is given as an infusion into a vein over a period of time.
- It may be given as a shot into a vein.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

- If you need to store this drug at home, talk with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about how to store it.

General drug facts

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else's drugs.
- Keep a list of all your drugs (prescription, natural products, vitamins, OTC) with you. Give this list to your doctor.
- Talk with the doctor before starting any new drug, including prescription or OTC, natural products, or vitamins.
- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Check with your pharmacist about how to throw out unused drugs.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

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