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Paclitaxel (conventional): Patient drug information

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(For additional information [see "Paclitaxel \(conventional\): Drug information"](#))

Brand Names: Canada Apo-Paclitaxel; Paclitaxel for Injection; Paclitaxel Injection USP

Warning

- This drug may have unsafe effects on the bone marrow. The bone marrow may not be able to make cells found in the blood as well as it used to for a few weeks. This may raise the chance of bleeding or infection. Talk with the doctor.
- If you have a low white blood cell count, talk with your doctor. This drug must not be used in people with certain low white blood cell counts.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- Very bad and sometimes deadly allergic side effects have rarely happened. Talk with your doctor.
- Other drugs will be given with this drug to help avoid side effects.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat cancer.

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

- If you have an allergy to paclitaxel 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 are breast-feeding. Do not breast-feed while you take this drug.

This drug may interact with other drugs or health problems.

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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Some products have alcohol in them. Talk with the doctor.
- Talk with your doctor before you drink alcohol or use other drugs and natural products that slow your actions.
- Check blood pressure and heart rate as the doctor has told you. Talk with the doctor.
- Change in eyesight may rarely happen. Eyesight most often gets back to normal when this drug is stopped.
- It is common to have nerve problems with this drug. Nerve problems may include a numbness, tingling, or burning feeling in your hands or feet. Call your doctor if you have nerve problems that are very bad, cause problems with daily living, or do not go away.
- Very bad and sometimes deadly liver problems have happened with this drug. Call your doctor right away if you have signs of liver problems like dark urine, feeling tired, not hungry, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.
- If you are 65 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.
- 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.
- If you are pregnant or you get pregnant while taking this drug, 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.
- 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, or wound that will not heal.
- Signs of bleeding like throwing up blood or throw up that looks like coffee grounds; coughing up blood; blood in the urine; black, red, or tarry stools; bleeding from the gums; vaginal bleeding that is not normal; bruises without a reason or that get bigger; or any bleeding that is very bad or that you cannot stop.
- Signs of high or low blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, change in eyesight.
- Signs of kidney problems like unable to pass urine, change in how much urine is passed, blood in the

- urine, or a big weight gain.
- Shortness of breath.
 - Swelling.
 - Chest pain or pressure or a fast heartbeat.
 - Flushing.
 - A heartbeat that does not feel normal.
 - Slow heartbeat.
 - Very bad belly pain.
 - Very upset stomach or throwing up.
 - Very loose stools (diarrhea).
 - Very bad muscle or joint pain.
 - Feeling very tired or weak.
 - Change in eyesight.
 - This drug may cause tissue damage if the drug leaks from the vein. Tell your nurse if you have any redness, burning, pain, swelling, blisters, skin sores, or leaking of fluid where the drug is going into your body.

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:

- Feeling tired or weak.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Loose stools (diarrhea).
- Mouth irritation or mouth sores.
- Hair loss.
- Muscle or joint pain.

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.

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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