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## Topotecan: Patient drug information

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(For additional information [see "Topotecan: Drug information"](#) and [see "Topotecan: Pediatric drug information"](#))

**Brand Names: US** Hycamtin

**Brand Names: Canada** Hycamtin; Topotecan For Injection; Topotecan Hydrochloride For Injection

### Warning

- This drug may lower the ability of your bone marrow to make blood cells that your body needs. This can lead to needing a blood transfusion and very bad and sometimes deadly bleeding problems or infections. Tell your doctor right away if you have signs of infection like fever, chills, or sore throat; any bruising or bleeding; or if you feel very tired or weak.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.

### 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 topotecan 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: Low white blood cell count, low platelet count, or very bad anemia.
- If you are taking any of these drugs: Amiodarone, azithromycin, captopril, carvedilol, clarithromycin, conivaptan, cyclosporine, diltiazem, dronedarone, eltrombopag, erythromycin, felodipine, itraconazole, ketoconazole, lopinavir, quercetin, quinidine, ranolazine, ritonavir, ticagrelor, or verapamil.
- If you are breast-feeding or plan to breast-feed.

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?

### All products:

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Avoid driving and doing other tasks or actions that call for you to be alert until you see how this drug affects you.
- 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.
- The oral form of this drug can cause very bad diarrhea. Sometimes, this may be life-threatening and may need to be treated in the hospital. Talk with the doctor.
- 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.
- 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.
- If you are 65 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.
- 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 affect sperm in men. This may affect being able to father a child. Talk with the doctor.
- This drug may cause fertility problems. This may affect being able to have children. Talk with the doctor.
- This drug may cause harm to the unborn baby or loss of the unborn baby if you take it while you are pregnant.
- If you are female, use birth control that you can trust to prevent pregnancy while taking this drug and for 1 month after stopping this drug.
- If you get pregnant while taking this drug or within 1 month after your last dose, call your doctor right away.

### Capsule:

- If the capsule is opened or broken, do not touch the contents. If the contents are touched or they get in the eyes, wash hands or eyes 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:

### All products:

- 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.
- Very upset stomach or throwing up.
- Stomach cramps.
- Loose stools (diarrhea).
- Feeling very tired or weak.
- Very bad and sometimes deadly lung problems have happened with this drug. Call your doctor right away if you have lung or breathing problems like trouble breathing, shortness of breath, or a cough that is new or worse.
- This drug can cause a very bad and sometimes deadly bowel problem (neutropenic enterocolitis). Call your doctor right away if you have stomach pain with or without a fever.

**Injection:**

- 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.
- Hair loss.
- Not hungry.

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.

**Capsule:**

- Take with or without food.
- Swallow whole. Do not chew, open, or crush.
- The dose you get may be made up of 2 or more different strengths and colors of capsules.
- If you throw up after taking this drug, do not repeat the dose.

**Injection:**

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

## What do I do if I miss a dose?

**Capsule:**

- Take a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

**Injection:**

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

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

**Capsule:**

- Store capsules in original container in a refrigerator.
- Do not freeze.
- Protect from light.

**Injection:**

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

**All products:**

- 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.

## 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.
- 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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