

# Patient Education

## Medication Information



# Dacarbazine

(DTIC<sup>®</sup>)

## What is Dacarbazine?

Dacarbazine is a chemotherapy drug used to treat many different types of cancer. Dacarbazine works by inhibiting the replication of cancer cells.

## How will I receive Dacarbazine?

Dacarbazine is given as an injection into your vein (IV).

## What are the common side effects?

Please see chapter 5, “Managing Symptoms at Home,” in the manual.

What You May Expect	What You Should Do
<p><b>Decreased blood counts</b> (lowered platelets and white blood cells) may occur. You may develop infections more easily and may bruise more easily. This is generally not seen until 2 to 4 weeks after treatment with Dacarbazine is started.</p> <p>Your health care providers will test your blood frequently to monitor your blood counts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Report any signs of infection, fever, and unusual bleeding or bruising.</li></ul>
<p><b>Nausea and vomiting</b> is common and usually occurs within a few hours after treatment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You will be given medications to help you better tolerate these side effects.</li><li>• See the “Nausea” section of the manual.</li></ul>

Dacarbazine may cause <b>burning at the injection site</b> if it leaks under the skin.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tell your nurse or doctor immediately if you have any burning, pain, redness or swelling while the medication is being infused.</li></ul>
Your skin may become more <b>sensitive to sunlight.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wear protective clothing or use sunscreen when out of doors.</li></ul>
<b>Hair loss, thinning or a change in the texture</b> is rare with Dacarbazine.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Your hair will regrow once your Dacarbazine treatment is finished.</li><li>• See the “Body Image” section of the manual.</li><li>• Use a gentle baby shampoo and soft brush. Avoid hair spray, bleaches or perms.</li></ul>

**These are the most common side effects. Others may occur. Please report any problems to your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse.**

**Call and Seek Help Immediately If You Have:**

- Signs of an infection such as fever, chills, cough, pain or burning when you urinate.
- Signs of uncontrolled bleeding such as black tarry stools, blood in the urine, or severe bruising.

**Contact Your Nurse or Doctor If You Have:**

- Uncontrolled nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.
- Signs of liver problems such as yellowing of the skin or eyes.
- Skin rash or hives.

**Special Instructions**

Inform your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. Use contraception when receiving chemotherapy. Inform your doctor if you have a history of liver disease.

Talk to your doctor or nurse about any additional questions.

## Questions?

Call \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC Clinic staff are also available to help at any time.

## Drug-Drug Interactions

The medications digoxin (Lanoxin<sup>®</sup>), carbamazepine (Tegretol<sup>®</sup>) and phenytoin (Dilantin<sup>®</sup>) may interact with Dacarbazine. You should avoid aspirin, ibuprofen (Motrin<sup>®</sup>, Advil<sup>®</sup>) or other anti-inflammatory medications. Tell your doctor if you are taking these or any other medications. Check with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist before starting any new medications.

## Drug-Food Interactions

None known at this time.

For more complete information, please request an additional teaching sheet from the National Library of Medicine at [www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginformation.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginformation.html), your nurse, pharmacist, or visit the Resource Center.

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*A member of the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance, a collaboration of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, the University of Washington and Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center*