

PROCARBAZINE

Other names: Natulan®



Important note: The following information is intended to add to, not replace, the knowledge and judgment of your doctor, pharmacist or other health care professional.

Why you are taking this medication

Procarbazine (pro-KAR-ba-zeen) is a medicine that is used to treat many types of cancer. It is a capsule that you take by mouth.

Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or allergic reaction to procarbazine before taking procarbazine.

It is important to take procarbazine exactly as directed by your doctor. Make sure you understand the directions. Procarbazine should be taken with food and a glass of water or juice.

If you vomit within one hour of taking procarbazine, do not take a second dose. Call your doctor during office hours for advice. You will be told whether you need to take another dose.

If you miss a dose of procarbazine call your doctor (during office hours) to ask about making up the missed dose.

Store procarbazine capsules out of the reach of children, at room temperature, away from heat, light and moisture.

A blood test may be taken before each treatment. The dose and timing of your chemotherapy may be changed based on the test results and/or other side effects.

Tell other doctors or dentists that you are being treated with procarbazine before you receive any treatment from them.

Other medication and dietary interactions

Other medicines may interact with procarbazine, including some commonly available cough and cold products. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking other medicine including herbal or complementary products and medicines you can buy without a prescription.

Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start taking any new medicines.

Avoid drinking alcohol while taking procarbazine. You may experience flushing, headache, nausea and vomiting, and/or dizziness if you drink alcohol while taking procarbazine. You may also experience a rise in blood pressure with certain alcoholic beverages such as red wines, vermouth and beer.

Do not smoke while taking procarbazine as there is an increased risk of developing lung cancer in people who smoke and take procarbazine.

Avoid certain foods and beverages which contain tyramine as they may interact with procarbazine. These foods may cause headache, flushing, fast or uneven heartbeat, nausea and vomiting or a significant rise in blood pressure. Eat only fresh foods, especially if they contain meat, fish or poultry. Avoid foods that are aged, spoiled, fermented or pickled. Avoid the following products in these food categories while taking procarbazine:

- Milk products: any outdated or non-pasteurised dairy products, all cheeses other than cream cheese, cottage cheese or ricotta cheese.
- Bread and cereals: any containing cheese.
- Meat, fish or poultry: dry, fermented sausages (e.g. salami, pepperoni), smoked or pickled fish, non-fresh meat and poultry, any leftover food containing meat, fish or poultry.
- Fruits and vegetables: any overripe, spoiled or fermented fruit or vegetable, fava or broad beans, overripe avocado, sauerkraut.
- Soups: containing meat extracts or cheese.
- Fats and oils: gravies and sauces containing meat extracts.
- Other: tofu and soy products, protein dietary supplements, meat and yeast extracts (e.g. Oxo, Marmite, Vegemite, Bovril, powdered instant stocks, brewers yeast).
- Beverages: all red wines, vermouth, beer (including low alcohol beers).

For further information talk to your dietician.

Follow the drug, alcohol and food warnings **for a further week** after you stop taking procarbazine.

Pregnancy and breast feeding

Procarbazine may cause sterility in men and menopause in women. If you plan to have children, discuss this with your doctor before being treated with procarbazine.

It is best to use birth control while being treated with procarbazine. Procarbazine may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy.

Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant.

Do not breast feed during treatment.

Side effects

Unfortunately as well as having good effects, most medicines have some effects on your body that are unwanted. These are called *side effects*.

Side effects are listed in the following table in the order in which they may occur. Tips to help manage the side effects are included.

SIDE EFFECTS	WHAT TO DO
<p>Nausea and vomiting may occur after your treatment and may last for 24 hours. This usually improves within a few days as your body adjusts to procarbazine.</p>	<p>You may be given a prescription for anti-nausea medicine(s) to take at home. It is easier to prevent nausea than to treat it once it has occurred, so follow the directions closely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide your daily procarbazine dose into portions to take 2-3 times a day. • Drink plenty of liquids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts.
<p>Your white blood cells may decrease 2-4 weeks after your treatment. They usually return to normal 4-6 weeks after your last treatment. White blood cells protect your body by fighting bacteria (germs) that cause infection. When they are low, you are at greater risk of having an infection.</p>	<p>To help prevent infection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash your hands often and always after using the toilet. • Avoid crowds and people who are sick. • Stop taking procarbazine and call your doctor immediately at the first sign of an infection such as fever (over 38°C by an oral thermometer), chills, cough, or burning when you pass urine.
<p>Your platelets may decrease 2-4 weeks after your treatment. They usually return to normal 4-6 weeks after your last treatment. Platelets help to make your blood clot when you hurt yourself.</p> <p>You may bruise or bleed more easily than usual.</p>	<p>To help prevent bleeding problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try not to bruise, cut or burn yourself. • Clean your nose by blowing gently. Do not pick your nose. • Avoid constipation. • Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush as your gums may bleed more easily. Maintain good oral hygiene. <p>Some medicines such as aspirin or ibuprofen may increase your risk of bleeding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not stop taking any medication that has been prescribed by a doctor. • For minor pain, try paracetamol first.
<p>Skin rashes may occur.</p>	<p>Call your doctor.</p>
<p>Your skin may darken in some areas such as your hands, elbows and knees.</p>	<p>This will slowly return to normal once you stop treatment with procarbazine.</p>
<p>Your skin may sunburn more easily than usual.</p>	<p>To help prevent sunburn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid direct sunlight. • Wear a hat, long sleeves and long pants or skirt outside on sunny days. • Apply a sun block lotion with an SPF (sun protection factor) of at least 15.
<p>Hair loss is rare with procarbazine. If you lose hair it will grow back once you stop treatment with procarbazine. Colour and texture may change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a gentle shampoo and soft brush. • Take care when using hair spray, bleaches, dyes and perms.

Stop taking procarbazine and see your doctor or get emergency help immediately if you have:

- Signs of **serious high blood pressure** such as severe chest pain, enlarged pupils, fast or slow heartbeat, severe headache, eyes sensitive to light, increased sweating, clammy skin or stiff and sore neck.
- Signs of an **infection** such as fever (over 38°C by an oral thermometer); shaking chills, cough, sore throat, productive cough (coughing up thick or green sputum), cloudy or foul smelling urine, painful, tender or swollen red skin wounds or sores.
- Signs of **bleeding problems** such as black, tarry stools; blood in urine; pinpoint red spots on skin, extensive bruising.
- Signs of **blood clot** such as tenderness or hardness over a vein, calf swelling and tenderness, sudden onset of cough, chest pain or shortness of breath.
- Signs of an **allergic reaction** (rare) soon after a treatment including dizziness, fast heart beat, face swelling or breathing problems.
- Signs of **heart problems** such as fast or uneven heartbeat, chest pain or pressure.
- **Seizures** or **loss of consciousness**.
- Repeated **vomiting** and unable to keep fluids or medication down.

See your doctor as soon as possible (during office hours) if you have:

- Signs of **anaemia** such as unusual tiredness or weakness.
- Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay coloured stools.
- **Skin rash** or **itching**.
- **Changes in eyesight**.
- **Hearing problems**.
- **Dizziness, confusion or trouble walking**.
- Signs of **bladder problems** such as changes in urination, painful burning sensation, presence of blood or abdominal pain.
- Persistent **cough** or **shortness of breath**.
- Increased **sore throat or mouth** that makes it difficult to swallow comfortably.

Check with your doctor if any of the following continue or bother you:

- Uncontrolled nausea, vomiting, weight loss, constipation or diarrhoea.
- Headache or pain not controlled with paracetamol.
- Numbness or tingling in feet or hands.
- Easy bruising or bleeding.
- Redness, swelling, pain or sores on your lips, tongue, mouth or throat.
- Swelling of hands, feet or lower legs.
- Trouble sleeping.

Read this leaflet and discuss any questions you have about your medicines with your doctor or pharmacist