

# Leucovorin

## Names

Leucovorin (*loo-koe-VOR-in*) is a form of folic acid. Folinic acid, citrovorum factor, and 5-formyl tetrahydrofolate are other names for this medication.

## How is it Administered?

This medication comes as a tablet to be taken by mouth, and a liquid that can be infused through an IV (intravenous) line or injected into a muscle (intramuscular or IM injection).

## Why Am I Taking Leucovorin?

Leucovorin reduces the side effects of methotrexate and enhances the effects of fluorouracil (5-FU).

## How Does Leucovorin Work?

Leucovorin is in a class of medications called folic acid (vitamin B12) analogs. It works by protecting healthy cells from the effects of some drugs, such as methotrexate.

In the case of 5-FU, it allows that medication to stay in the cells longer. The hope is that 5-FU will have a greater effect if it stays in the cancer cells longer.

## What Should I Tell My Doctor Before I Begin?

Tell your doctor if you:

- are allergic to leucovorin or folic acid (Folicet, in multi-vitamins)
- have anemia (low red blood cell count) caused by lack of vitamin B12 or an inability to absorb vitamin B12
- have or have ever had kidney disease, or a buildup of fluid in the chest or stomach areas
- have nausea
- are pregnant or breastfeeding

**This drug may interact with other medications or cause harmful side effects. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all prescription or over-the-counter medications, vitamins, herbal or diet supplements you take.**

What Are Some Possible Side Effects?

Side effects are usually due to other chemotherapy medications being given with Leucovorin. When taken with methotrexate, leucovorin lessens the side effects of methotrexate. When taken with 5-FU, it may enhance the side effects of 5-FU.

When Should I Call the Doctor?

**Call your doctor immediately if you experience:**

- any sign of an allergic reaction: itching or hives, swelling in your face or hands, swelling or tingling in your mouth or throat, chest tightness, trouble breathing, dizziness, or palpitations

What Else Do I Need to Know About Leucovorin?

- Drink 2-3 quarts of fluid (particularly water) every day (24 hours).
- If you take tablets, store them at room temperature, away from heat, moisture, and direct light (not in the bathroom).
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember it. If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and continue your regular dosing schedule. Do not take a double dose to make up for a missed one.
- Check with your doctor before you take aspirin or products that contain aspirin.
- Though rare, nausea and vomiting have been reported by people taking leucovorin.
- **Do not get pregnant or father a child while taking this medication.** Barrier methods of contraception, such as condoms, are recommended. This drug may be harmful to a fetus.
- Do not breastfeed while you taking leucovorin.
- Keep all your appointments with your doctor and the laboratory.
- If you have any additional questions about leucovorin, please ask your doctor or pharmacist.