

Topotecan IV

Names	The generic drug name is topotecan (toh - poh - tee - kan). The brand name is Hycamtin® (Hi – kam – tin). There may be other names for this medication.
How is Topotecan Administered?	This medication is infused into a vein (intravenous or IV), usually in an arm or hand. It can also be given through a central catheter such as a chest port, which delivers the medication into a large vein.
What Is It Used For?	Topotecan is used to treat ovarian or lung cancer that has spread, and that did not improve after treatment with other chemotherapy medications. Doctors may use topotecan for other cancers if they believe it may help.
How Does it Work?	<p>Cancer is a group of diseases in which abnormal cells divide without control. Both normal and cancer cells go through cycles (resting, growing, and division/reproduction). Topotecan is a type of plant alkaloid called a topoisomerase inhibitor; it attacks during certain stages of the cell cycle. If the cells are unable to reproduce, they die.</p> <p>The faster cells are reproducing, the more likely it is that chemo will damage/kill the cells. Unfortunately, chemo may also affect normal cells that reproduce quickly. The cells most likely to be affected are hair follicles, blood cells, and the cells that line the digestive tract (mouth, stomach, intestines), causing side effects. These normal cells will eventually grow back and be healthy.</p>
What Should I Tell My Doctor Before I Begin Topotecan?	<p>Tell your doctor if you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• are allergic to topotecan or any other drugs• have or have ever had kidney disease• are pregnant or breastfeeding• are taking filgrastim (Neupogen®) or other chemotherapy drugs <p>This drug can interact with other medications. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all prescription or over-the-counter medications, vitamins, herbal, or diet supplements that you are taking.</p> <p>Tell us ahead of time if you have had any allergic reactions or side effects to any medicines you have received in the past.</p>

What Are Some Possible Side Effects?

- Decreased levels of white blood cells, red blood cells, and platelets (increased risk of infection, anemia/fatigue, and bleeding)
- Fatigue (unrelated to anemia)
- Nausea, and vomiting
- Hair loss or thinning
- Diarrhea, constipation
- Fever, headache
- Stomach, bone, or back pain
- Mouth sores
- Loss of appetite
- Redness or bruising at the injection site
- Rash

How Can I Manage These Side Effects?

- Drink at least 2-3 quarts of fluid every 24 hours, unless your doctor instructs you otherwise, to help avoid dehydration.
- To help avoid infections, stay away from crowds or people with colds, flu, or other infections. Wash your hands often. Talk to your doctor before you have any vaccinations.
- To help prevent bleeding problems, be careful when handling sharp objects. Stay away from rough sports or other situations where you could be bruised or injured. Use an electric razor. Be careful when using a toothbrush or dental floss (your doctor may recommend other ways to clean your teeth and gums).
- Fatigue may occur anytime during your treatment cycle. You are encouraged to eat well and continue your activities of daily living as much as you can. Take rests during the day, limit your activities, and do activities at a time of day when you feel a bit more energetic. Learn to ask for and accept help with household and daily chores.
- Nausea: To help prevent nausea, avoid fried, spicy, and/or fatty foods on the days you receive chemo and for 2-3 days afterwards. Eating small, frequent meals may help. If you feel nauseous, try foods and drinks that are 'easy on the stomach' or made you feel better when you were sick in the past. These generally include bland foods, ginger ale, dry crackers, and toast. Ask your doctor about medication to help prevent or lessen nausea and diarrhea.
- **Hair loss:** Some people cut their hair for their own comfort once it begins to fall out. Hair will grow back once chemo is over, but it may have a different color or texture. Talk to your doctor or nurse about a wig before hair loss begins. You can get a wig in the Resource Center for Patients and Families; call **716-845-1729**

How Can I Manage
These Side Effects?
(cont.)

- **Diarrhea:** Loperamide (Imodium®) is available over the counter. Your doctor will tell you if and how much to take. **Do not take more than 8 tablets (16mg) in a 24-hour period.** Call the clinic if this does not provide relief within 24 hours.
- **Constipation:** To help prevent constipation, add high fiber foods such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains to your diet and, if possible, keep moving throughout the day. If you do not move your bowels in 2-3 days, you may need to take a stool softener or laxative. Check with your doctor. A suggested laxative is Senna-S (contains senna plus docusate), which is available over the counter. If this is ineffective after 2 days, please notify the clinic.
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) may help relieve discomfort, fever, and headache. Ask your doctor before taking any medications.
- **Mouth care** is very important. To minimize mouth problems, rinse your mouth with a mixture of ½ tsp of baking soda in 8 oz of water after every meal and at bedtime. Brush your teeth and gums often with a soft toothbrush. (Soften it further by running it under warm water). Avoid smoking, alcohol, and mouthwashes that contain alcohol.
- **Pain at IV site:** Apply warm compresses if you have any pain, redness or swelling at the IV site, and call your doctor.
- **Skin care:** Use sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher when you are outdoors, even for a short time. (Use SPF 30 if the skin has been exposed to radiation therapy.) Wear wide-brimmed hats, long-sleeved shirts, and pants. Keep your neck, chest, and back covered. If you develop a rash, do not put anything on it unless it is approved by your doctor.

What Else Should I
Know About
Topotecan?

- If you are having surgery, including dental surgery, tell the doctor or dentist that you are receiving topotecan.
- Topotecan might make you feel very tired or weak. Do not drive a car or operate machinery until you know how this medication affects you.
- May interfere with the normal menstrual cycle (period) in women and stop sperm production in men. Do NOT assume that you cannot get pregnant or that you cannot get someone else pregnant. Use a reliable barrier method of birth control like condoms. Topotecan may harm the fetus. Talk to your doctor about when it will be safe to stop using birth control.
- Keep all appointments with your doctor and the laboratory.
- If you would like more information, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

When Should I Call the Doctor?

Call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency department if you have life-threatening symptoms or signs of a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) such as swelling or tingling in your face, tongue, or throat; chest tightness; trouble breathing; dizziness; palpitations (irregular heartbeat); nausea and vomiting

Call your doctor immediately if you have:

- signs of infection: **Fever of 100.4°F (38°C)** or higher, chills, cough, sore throat, pain or burning upon urination; redness or tenderness along a vein, at an IV site, or at any other wound or skin irritation
- signs of an allergic reaction: Itching, hives, rash
- unusual bruising or bleeding: Bleeding lasts more than 10-15 minutes or that causes dizziness; black or bloody stools; vomit that is bloody or that looks like coffee grounds; blood in your urine or phlegm /mucus, unusually heavy menstrual bleeding, spontaneous bleeding from your gums or nose, or superficial bleeding into the skin that appears as a rash of pinpoint-sized reddish-purple spots (petechiae)

Call your doctor as soon as possible if you have:

- nausea or vomiting that is not relieved by prescribed medication or that prevents you from eating or drinking
- mouth blistering (painful redness, swelling or ulcers)
- extreme fatigue that interferes with daily activities
- diarrhea (4-6 episodes in a 24-hour period) or changes in normal bowel habits for more than 2 days
- dizziness