Bendamustine

Names
The generic drug name is bendamustine (ben-da-MUS-teen). Treanda® is a brand name. There may be other names for this medication.

How is it Administered?
Your medicine will be given by injection into a vein (IV or intravenous).

Why am I Taking Bendamustine?
Bendamustine is used to treat chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) and non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma.

How Does it Work?
Cancer is a group of diseases in which abnormal cells divide without control. Both normal and cancer cells go through cycles that include a resting phase, active growing phases, and division. Your chemotherapy schedule is based upon the type of cancer you have, the rate at which they divide, and the times when each drug is the most likely to be effective. This is why chemotherapy is typically given in cycles.

Bendamustine is in a class of drugs known as alkalyting agents. Alkylating agents are most active in the resting phase of the cell. Bendamustine is a nitrogen mustard derivative.

What Should I Tell My Doctor Before I Begin?
Tell your doctor if you:
• have had an allergic reaction to bendamustine or mannitol
• have kidney or liver disease
• are pregnant or breastfeeding
• use any tobacco products

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 that you are taking.

What Are Some Possible Side Effects?
• Low blood cell count (decreased red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets), which increases your risk of anemia, infections, and bleeding
• Nausea, vomiting, heartburn, and/or stomach pain
• Altered sense of taste, loss of appetite, and/or weight loss
• Diarrhea, constipation
What Are Some Possible Side Effects? (cont)

- Fatigue
- Rash, itching, sweating, and/or dry skin
- Headache, dizziness
- Mouth sores, dry mouth
- Depression, anxiety, and/or difficulty sleeping
- Back, joint, bone, and/or arm or leg pain

How Can I Manage These Side Effects?

- Stay away from people with colds, flu, or other infections.
- Wash your hands often, and talk to your doctor before you have any vaccinations (immunizations), such as a flu shot.
- Be careful when handling sharp objects. Use an electric razor. Stay away from rough sports or other situations that could cause injury.
- Drink 2-3 quarts of fluid every day, particularly during the 24 hours before your treatment and 48 hours after a treatment, unless your doctor gives you other instructions.
- Eat small, frequent meals. Ask your doctor about medication to help prevent or lessen nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.
- Mouth care is very important while taking this drug. 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 before brushing).
- Avoid smoking, alcohol, and mouthwashes that contain alcohol.
- Avoid sun exposure. Use a sunblock with SPF 30 or higher, and wear protective clothes when in the sun.
- Do not put anything on a rash unless your doctor has given her/his approval

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
- any sign of infection: fever of 100.5°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
- 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)

- shortness of breath or chest pain
- problems urinating

Call your doctor as soon as possible if you experience:

- nausea or vomiting that is not relieved by prescribed medication or that prevents you from eating or drinking

- If you have had an infusion reaction (chills, fever, itching, rash), your doctor/nurse may premedicate you before your next infusion.
- Bendamustine may make you tired. Do not drive a car or operate machinery until you know how this medication affects you.
- Bendamustine can cause a rare, but serious, side effect called tumor lysis syndrome. This condition is a result of a large number of cancer cells being killed quickly during treatment. The waste products from these dead cells can harm your kidneys, possibly causing kidney failure. Tumor lysis syndrome usually occurs within the first two days after therapy. To help prevent this syndrome, your doctor may advise you to drink a lot of fluids, especially water, and may prescribe medication. Let your doctors know right away if you have problems urinating.
- Bendamustine may decrease your fertility; it can stop sperm production in men and interfere with the normal menstrual cycle in women. Speak with your doctor or nurse if you plan to have children in the future.
- You should not plan to have children while receiving this drug or for three months afterward because bendamustine may harm a fetus. Do not assume that you cannot get pregnant or father a child while you are taking this medication. Use a reliable method of birth control to prevent pregnancy, a barrier method is recommended.
- If you would like more information about bendamustine, please talk to your doctor.

What Else Should I Know About Bendamustine?