

Eribulin

Names

The generic drug name is eribulin (er'' i bue' lin). The brand name is Halaven™. There may be other names for this medication.

How is Eribulin Given?

This medication is given by injecting it into a vein (intravenously or IV) as an *IV push*. IV push means the medication is injected into your IV line. The medication is usually injected slowly, over 3-5 minutes, to avoid irritating the vein.

What is Eribulin Used For?

Eribulin is used to treat breast cancer that has spread to other parts of the body (metastasized).

How Does it Work?

Cancer is a group of diseases in which abnormal cells reproduce without control. The faster cells reproduce, the more likely it is that chemo will damage and/or kill them. Since some cells in your body naturally reproduce rapidly, these they are likely to be damaged/destroyed by chemo. These normal cells will eventually grow back and be healthy. During treatment, however, you may experience side effects involving the cells that line the digestive tract (mouth, stomach, and intestines), the hair follicles, and bone marrow. Your chemo schedule is based upon your cancer type, how fast the cancer cells multiply, and the time of the cells' reproductive cycle when the medication is the most likely to be effective. This is why chemotherapy is typically given in cycles.

Eribulin is in a class of drugs known as microtubule dynamics inhibitors. It works by interrupting the normal cell (division) cycle, causing the cells to die.

What Should I Tell My Doctor Before I Begin?

Tell your doctor if you:

- have ever had an allergic reaction to eribulin or have other allergies
- have or have ever had heart problems including a slow heartbeat or long QT syndrome (a potentially serious condition in which normal heart rhythm is disrupted); low potassium or magnesium levels in your blood, or liver or kidney disease
- are pregnant or breastfeeding

This drug may interact with other medications, increasing or decreasing their effectiveness or causing harmful side effects. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about any prescription or over-the-counter medications, vitamins, herbal or diet supplements that you are taking.

What Are Some Possible Side Effects?

- Bone marrow depression (abnormally low levels of white blood cells, red blood cells, and/or platelets that increase your risks for infection, fatigue, and/or bleeding)
- Fatigue and/or weakness
- Hair loss
- Bone, muscle, back, or joint pain
- Headache
- Peripheral neuropathy: Numbness, tingling (pins and needles), or burning in your hands and feet
- Nausea, loss of appetite, weight loss
- Constipation

How Can I Manage These Side Effects?

- Drink at least 2-3 quarts of fluid, especially water, every 24 hours, unless your doctor tells you to limit your fluids. This helps prevent constipation and dehydration.
- To help avoid infections, stay away from crowds or people with colds, flu, or other infections. Talk to your doctor before you have any vaccinations. **Wash your hands often.**
- 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).
- If you feel fatigued, do not drive or operate any type of dangerous tools or equipment. Try to save energy and rest. Prioritize and only do what is most important. Learn to ask for and accept help with chores and errands. Eat well and stay out of bed as much as possible during your treatment to stay strong.
- **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. You can get a free wig and head covering in the Resource Center for Patients and Families. Call **716-845-1729**.

- **Aches and pains:** Ask your doctor before taking any medications or products for headache, fever, aches, or any other symptom.
- **Peripheral neuropathy:** Monitor your fingers and toes for any decreased sensations or tingling. Report any sensation changes to your doctor. If you develop peripheral neuropathy:
 - Stay as active as you can to help keep your muscles working. If you exercise in a gym, tell the instructor that you have peripheral neuropathy and ask for instructions.
 - Foot and hand massages may help relieve stiffness. After the massage, remember to clean the lotions and creams off your hands and feet.
 - Protect your heads and feet, particularly when handling hot items or when weather is severe. Use oven mitts, gloves, socks, and shoes
 - Have someone check the water temperature before you take a shower, wash dishes, etc. or use a thermometer or a part of your body that is not affected by PN.
 - Get rid of throw rugs and other obstacles that can increase your risk of falling or tripping.
 - Ask about balance training and/or physical or occupational therapy.
- **Nausea:** If prescribed, take anti-nausea medication as scheduled and also as soon as you feel nauseous. 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.
- **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 will need to take a laxative. 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.
- 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.

- Use sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher when you are outdoors, even for a short time. If you develop a rash, do not put anything on it unless it is approved by your doctor.

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 100.4°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
- 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
- your heartbeat is irregular (feels like it is skipping a beat or if you feel any other noticeable change in your heartbeat)

Call your doctor as soon as possible if you have:

- difficulty walking or changes in the way you walk or joint pain
- persistent headache
- painful mouth or throat that makes it difficult to eat or drink
- diarrhea of three stools a day or diarrhea with weakness
nausea or vomiting not relieved by prescribed medication or that prevents you from eating or drinking

What Else Do I Need to Know About Eribulin?

- Tell the doctor or dentist that you are receiving eribulin if you are having surgery.
- Eribulin may cause a type of irregular heartbeat called QT prolongation, which may have serious consequences. Your doctor will decide if you need heart monitoring or blood tests while you are being treated.
- Do not have children while during treatment or for a while afterwards. Use a reliable method of birth control; barrier methods like condoms are recommended. Eribulin may harm the fetus. Do not breastfeed.
- Your doctor may order blood tests (LFTs) to check how well your liver is functioning during treatment with eribulin.
- If you would like more information about eribulin, talk to your doctor