

# Pertuzumab

Names	Pertuzumab (per tooz' ue mab) is the generic drug name. Perjeta® is a brand name. There may be other names for this medication.
How is It Administered?	This medication is administered by IV, meaning it is infused into the blood through a vein in your arm, chest, or hand. Usually, the infusion takes 30-60 minutes, and is repeated every 3 weeks.
Why am I Taking Pertuzumab?	This drug is used along with trastuzumab (Herceptin®) and docetaxel (Taxotere®) to treat HER2-positive breast cancer that is early-stage, locally advanced, inflammatory, or has spread to other parts of the body (metastatic).
How Does This Drug Work?	<p>Cancers are diseases in which abnormal cells reproduce uncontrollably. Traditional chemotherapy attacks cells that are reproducing quickly – both cancer cells and normal cells.</p> <p>Pertuzumab is a monoclonal antibody, a type of targeted therapy. It “targets” and attaches to an antigen (HER2) on the surface of the cancer cells. HER2 is a growth factor, so when pertuzumab interferes, the cancer cell dies. This therapy is given along with another type of targeted therapy, called trastuzumab (Herceptin®), because each medication blocks HER2 in a different way.</p>
What Should I Tell My Doctor Before I Begin?	<p>Before taking pertuzumab, tell your health care provider if you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• are allergic to pertuzumab or any other drugs</li><li>• have ever been treated with chemotherapy or radiation therapy</li><li>• have recently had a heart attack (myocardial infarction or MI) or if you have ever had high blood pressure, heart failure, an abnormal heart rhythm, or heart disease</li><li>• are pregnant or breastfeeding</li></ul> <p><b>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.</b></p>

## What are Some Possible Side Effects?

### More Common

- Low WBC (white blood cell count) count, which can increase your risk for infection
- Diarrhea
- Nausea
- Hair loss
- Fatigue
- Rash
- Pain, burning, numbness, or tingling in the hands or feet (peripheral neuropathy)

### Less Common

- Mouth sores, changes in taste
- Decrease in appetite
- Pale or dry skin, itching, changes in nails
- Fatigue, weakness
- Fever, headache, muscle/joint aches
- Shortness of breath, upper respiratory infection
- Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep
- Teary eyes
- Swelling
- Vomiting, abdominal pain

## How Can I Manage These Side Effects

- To help avoid infections: Stay away from people with colds or other infections. Wash your hands often. Talk to your doctor before you have any vaccinations, such as a flu shot.
- To help prevent nausea: Avoid spicy and greasy foods. Try eating smaller meals more often during the day instead of 2-3 large meals.
- To help prevent diarrhea, drink small sips of a liquid such as a sugar-free sports drink often throughout the day, eat mild foods such as crackers, and avoid spicy foods.

## How Can I Manage These Side Effects

- Nausea or diarrhea: Ask your doctor about medications to help prevent or lessen these side effects.
- 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.
- If you begin to have hair loss, you may want to stop by the Resource Center (inside the Sunflower Café (cafeteria) on the 1st floor of the hospital) or call **(716- 845-8659)** and talk about our wig and head covering program.
- Skin: Avoid sun exposure (including tanning beds). Wear SPF 30 (or higher) sun block that contains zinc oxide or titanium dioxide. Wear protective clothing such as hats, long sleeves, and long pants. Keep the area around any rash clean and dry. Check with your doctor before putting any products on your rash.
- Fatigue: Take rests during the day, limit your activities, and plan activity at a time of day when you feel a bit more energetic. Learn to ask for and accept help with household and daily chores.
- Trouble sleeping? Be consistent with bedtime and the time you get up. Avoid exercise and caffeine for a few hours before bed. Talk to your health care provider about other steps you can take
- Mouth care is very important. Rinse your mouth with a mixture of ½ teaspoon of baking soda in 8 ounces of water after every meal and at bedtime. Brush your teeth and gums often with soft toothbrush. (Soften it further by running it under warm water before brushing) Avoid smoking, alcohol, and mouthwashes that contain alcohol.
- Always check with your doctor before taking any over the counter medicines for headaches, aches and pains, etc.
- Need to talk to someone who has been through the journey you are just beginning? The Resource Center also offers a Cancer Coach program, which matches patients with survivors who can provide practical and emotional support. (Not medical advice.)

When Should I Call the Doctor?

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

- 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

- any sign of an allergic reaction: itching or hives, swelling in your face or hands, swelling/tingling in your mouth or throat, shortness of breath, chest tightness\*
- any sign of a heart problem: shortness of breath, cough, swelling of the ankles, legs, or face, rapid heartbeat, sudden weight gain, dizziness, or loss of consciousness.

\*If you have trouble breathing or feel like you cannot get any air, call 911, and go to the nearest hospital emergency room.

**Call your doctor or nurse as soon as possible (within 24 hours) if you have:**

- nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, mouth sores, or abdominal pain that does not go away with prescribed medicine or that prevents you from eating or drinking
- extreme fatigue weakness that interferes with daily activities
- Four (4) or more episodes of vomiting or diarrhea in 24 hours
- severe headache
- unusual bleeding or bruising

What Else Should I Know About Pertuzumab?

- Pertuzumab may cause serious or life-threatening heart problems, including heart failure.. Your doctor will check your heart function before and during your treatment
- Women will need to have a pregnancy test before you receive this medication. You should use effective birth control during treatment with pertuzumab and *for 6 months after your last dose*. This medication may cause loss of the pregnancy or the baby could be born with birth defects.
- Keep all appointments with your doctor and the laboratory.
- If you are having surgery, including dental surgery, tell the doctor or dentist that you are receiving pertuzumab.
- If you would like more information about pertuzumab, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

