

Brentuximab Vedotin

Names The generic drug name is brentuximab vedotin (bren TUX i mab ve Doe tin). The brand name is Adcetris®. There may be other names for this medication.

How is Brentuximab Given? Brentuximab is given by infusion into a vein (intravenous or IV). It is usually infused over 30 minutes, every 3 weeks.

Why am I Using Brentuximab? Brentuximab is used to treat people:

- with stage 3 or 4 Hodgkin lymphoma who have not received prior treatment
- who did not have a good response to either a stem cell transplant or 2 different drug therapy regimens with multiple chemotherapy agents
- who have systemic anaplastic large cell lymphoma and did not respond to at least 1 prior multiple drug therapy

How Does it Work? Brentuximab combines a chemotherapy drug with a targeted therapy drug. Brentuximab is a CD30-directed Antibody Drug Conjugate (ADC); it combines a monoclonal antibody, a type of targeted therapy, and a chemotherapy agent. Traditional chemotherapy drugs identify cancer cells by their rapid rate of division (reproduction). Targeted therapy drugs identify cancer cells by other features.

Brentuximab works like your body's natural antibodies. It 'targets' the cancer cells by recognizing and attaching to an antigen (CD30) on the surface of cancer cells – fitting like a key into a lock. When it attaches itself to the antigen, it lets the chemotherapy agent into the cell. The chemotherapy agent disturbs the structures inside the cell, and it is not able to reproduce. If it cannot reproduce, the cell will die.

What Should I Tell My Doctor Before I Begin? Tell your doctor if you:

- have had an allergic reaction to brentuximab
- have, or have ever, taken the chemotherapy antibiotic, *bleomycin*
- have any condition that affects your immune system
- are taking any medications that affect your immune system
- are pregnant or breastfeeding

This drug may interact with other medications or cause 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?

- Low levels of white blood cells, red blood cells, and platelets, which can increase your risk for infection, fatigue, and bleeding
- Fatigue
- Burning, numbness, tingling in arms, legs, hands, and feet (peripheral neuropathy)
- Digestive system problems: nausea, diarrhea, abdominal/stomach pain, vomiting, and/or constipation
- Upper respiratory infection and/or cough
- Fever
- Rash and/or itching
- Headache
- Muscle or joint pain, muscle spasms
- Sleep problems

How Can I Manage These Side Effects?

- Drink 2-3 quarts of fluid per day, preferably water, unless your doctor tells you otherwise. Moderate/severe diarrhea can put you at risk for dehydration. If not treated, serious problems can occur.
- To help avoid infections, stay away from crowds and people with colds or other infections. Wash your hands often. Talk to your doctor before you have any vaccinations, such as a flu shot.
- Be careful when handling sharp objects. Stay away from situations where you can be bruised, cut, or injured. Use an electric razor.
- If you are fatigued, take rests during the day, limit your activities, and do an 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.
- Ask your doctor about medication to help prevent or lessen nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, or headache.
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Motrin®) may help relieve aches, pains, or fever. **Be sure to talk to your doctor before taking any of these medications.**

- **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 hands 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:** Try eating small meals or snacks 5-6 times a day instead of 3 large meals. Avoid spicy, greasy, fried, and high fiber foods. If you have nausea, try foods and drinks that are 'easy on the stomach' or made you feel better when you were sick in the past.
- **Diarrhea:** Your doctor may recommend loperamide (Imodium®), which does not require a prescription. Take as directed. Do not take more than 8 tablets (16mg) in a 24-hours. Call the clinic if this does not provide relief within 24 hours.
- **Constipation:** To help prevent constipation, drink 2-3 quarts a day, adding fiber to your diet, and keep your body moving. Contact your doctor if you do not have a bowel movement in 2-3 days, They may recommend a stool softener or laxative.
- **Skin care:** Use sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher when you are outdoors. Wear sunglasses, wide-brimmed hats, long-sleeved shirts, and pants. Do not use tanning beds. If you get a rash, keep the area clean and dry and talk to your doctor before using any ointments or creams.
- **Mouth care:** 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 a soft toothbrush. (Soften it further by running it under warm water) Avoid smoking, alcohol, and mouthwashes that contain alcohol.

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 at any wound or skin irritation site
- any sign of allergic reaction: Itching; hives; difficulty swallowing or breathing; swelling in your face, throat, or hands; chest tightness
- sudden severe headache
- chest pain

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

- diarrhea 5-6 times in 1 day
- nausea that is not relieved by your prescribed medication and that interferes with your ability to eat or drink
- 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)
- fatigue that interferes with your ability to care for yourself
- mouth sores that affect your ability to eat or drink
- decreased urination

What Else Should I Know About Brentuximab?

- It is important to keep all your doctor and lab appointments.
- Brentuximab may increase your risk of developing a rare brain infection called *progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy* or PML. PML cannot be treated, prevented, or cured, and can cause death or severe disability. Call your doctor immediately if you have: decreased strength or weakness on one side of your body; difficulty with walking, speaking, or seeing; loss of coordination, headache, confusion, difficulty thinking clearly, memory loss, changes in mood; unusual behavior
- Do not get pregnant or father a child while receiving brentuximab, as it can harm a fetus. Both men and women should use contraception. Barrier methods, such as condoms, are recommended.
- Do not breastfeed while you are in treatment.
- If you have questions about brentuximab, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.