

# 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?	<p>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.</p> <p>Bendamustine is in a class of drugs known as alkylating agents. Alkylating agents are most active in the resting phase of the cell. Bendamustine is a nitrogen mustard derivative.</p>
What Should I Tell My Doctor Before I Begin?	<p>Tell your doctor if you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• have had an allergic reaction to bendamustine or mannitol</li><li>• have kidney or liver disease</li><li>• are pregnant or breastfeeding</li><li>• use any tobacco products</li></ul> <p><b>This drug may interact with other medications or cause harmful side effects. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about <u>all</u> prescription or over-the-counter medications, vitamins, herbal, or diet supplements that you are taking.</b></p>
What Are Some Possible Side Effects?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Low blood cell count (decreased red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets), which increases your risk of anemia, infections, and bleeding</li><li>• Nausea, vomiting, heartburn, and/or stomach pain</li><li>• Altered sense of taste, loss of appetite, and/or weight loss</li></ul>

## What Are Some Possible Side Effects? (cont.)

- Diarrhea, constipation
- 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?

- Drink 2-3 quarts every day, particularly during the 24 hours before your treatment and 48 hours after a treatment, unless your doctor gives you other instructions. This will help flush the medications out and help prevent dehydration and constipation. Try to drink a variety of fluids to help provide the calories, sodium (salt), and other electrolytes your body needs.
- Low white blood cell count/preventing infection: 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.
- Low platelets/preventing bleeding: Be careful when handling sharp objects. Use an electric razor. Stay away from rough sports or other situations that could cause injury.
- Nausea, vomiting: To help prevent nausea, avoid fried, spicy, and fatty foods on the days you receive chemo and for 2-3 days afterwards. Eating small, frequent meals may help. If you have nausea, try foods and drinks that are 'easy on the stomach' - bland foods, ginger ale, dry crackers, and toast.
- Loss of appetite: Stay active - try to take a short walk every day. Have a healthy snack every few hours instead of 3 large meals. Avoid foods with strong smells. Try a small amount of food on a small plate and eat foods at room temperature (not very hot or cold). Eat and snack on a schedule – even if you don't feel hungry. Choose high protein, high calorie foods. Add protein powder to foods. Choose moist or smooth foods such as pureed fruits – avoid spicy, greasy, heavy foods and foods high in salt or sugar.
- Taste Changes: Experiment with your diet to find foods that taste tolerable. Use plastic utensils if you have a metallic taste in your mouth. Try cold or room temperature foods instead of hot foods.
- 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.

- Skin care: You may be more sensitive to sunlight, take extra care to avoid sun exposure. Use a sunblock with SPF 30 or higher that protects against both UVA and UVB rays when you are outdoors, even if it is just for a short time. Keep your neck, chest, and back covered. Wear sunglasses and protective clothes (brimmed hat, long sleeves, etc.) when in the sun. Do not use tanning beds. If you develop a rash, keep the area clean and dry and check with your doctor before using any creams or ointments on the area.
- Aches, pains, fever: Check with your doctor before taking any medicines or products for these or any other side effects.

When Should I  
Call the Doctor?

**Call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency department if you have life-threatening symptoms such as** signs of severe allergic reaction: Swelling or tingling in your face, tongue, mouth, or throat; chest tightness; wheezing; trouble breathing or swallowing; dizziness, shortness of breath; heart palpitations; or hives.

Please let us know if you go to the emergency room or are admitted to the hospital.

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

- 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, 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

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What Else  
Should I Know  
About  
Bendamustine?

**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 2 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.
- Do not plan to have children while receiving this drug or for 3 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, barrier methods such as condoms or diaphragms are recommended.
- If you would like more information about bendamustine, please talk to your doctor or pharmacist.