

## Panitumumab

**Names** The generic drug name is panitumumab (pan i toom' ue mab). Vectibix® is a brand name. There may be other names for this medication.

**How is it Given?** Panitumumab is given by infusion into a vein (intravenous or IV), usually every 2 weeks.

**Why am I Receiving Panitumumab?** This drug treats colon or rectal cancer that expresses EGFR (see “How Does it Work”) and that has spread during or after treatment with certain chemotherapy medications (oxaliplatin, fluoropyrimidine, or irinotecan). Panitumumab may be prescribed for other uses.

**How Does it Work?** Cancer is a group of diseases in which abnormal cells reproduce uncontrollably. Traditional chemotherapy drugs identify and attack cancer cells because of their rapid reproduction. They also attack normal cells that reproduce quickly like those in the bone marrow and digestive tract.

Panitumumab is a type of targeted therapy, and it is designed to work differently. It is in a class of medications called monoclonal antibodies, and this is how it works. It attaches to a protein (EGFR or Epidermal Growth Factor Receptor) on the surface of the cancer cells and blocks the growth factor. This interferes with the cells’ ability to grow and reproduce. Some normal cells have EGFR on their surface, and these cells may be affected as well.

**What Should I Tell My Doctor Before I Begin Panitumumab?**

Tell your doctor if you:

- have had an allergic reaction to panitumumab
- have or have ever had lung disease
- have lower than normal levels of magnesium in your blood
- are pregnant or breastfeeding

**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, and supplements you are take.**

### What Are Some Possible Side Effects?

- Skin problems such as redness, itching, rash, dry skin, and increased sensitivity to sunlight (may worsen skin problems)
- Low levels of magnesium in the blood (hypomagnesemia): may cause fatigue, muscle cramps, mental problems, irregular heartbeat, and osteoporosis
- Tiredness or weakness
- Abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting
- Diarrhea and/or constipation
- Swelling in hands, feet, ankles, or lower legs
- Cough
- Redness/inflammation at the base of your fingernails
- Mouth sores, which could make eating and swallowing painful
- Eye irritation
- Increased skin sensitivity to sunlight

### How Can I Manage These Side Effects?

- Drink of lot of fluids (2-3 quarts per day), especially water, every day, unless otherwise directed by your doctor.
- If you develop a rash or other skin reactions, do not put anything on it unless you get your doctor's permission first.
- Ask your doctor about medication to help prevent or lessen nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or constipation. and vomiting
- Check with your doctor or nurse before you use enemas, laxatives, or suppositories for constipation.
- Mouth care is very important. Rinse your mouth with a mixture of ½ tsp of baking soda in 8 ounces of water after every meal and at bedtime. Brush your teeth and gums often with soft toothbrush.
- Avoid smoking, alcohol, and mouthwashes that contain alcohol.
- Avoid unnecessary or prolonged exposure to sunlight. Wear protective clothing, a hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen with SPF of 30 or higher.

### 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, hands, mouth, or throat; dizziness; or palpitations (rapid heartbeat)
- Shortness of breath, chest tightness
- any sign of infection: fever of 100.5°F (38°C) or higher, chills, cough, sore throat, painful urination; redness along a vein or wound
- signs of severe skin reaction: pimples; skin that is itchy, red, peeling, dry, or cracking; redness or swelling around the fingernails or toenails

**Call your doctor as soon as possible if you have:**

- unusual bruising or bleeding: bleeding lasting more than 10-15 minutes or that causes dizziness; black or bloody stools; bloody vomit, urine, or phlegm; unusually heavy menstrual bleeding, spontaneous bleeding from gums or nose, or reddish-purple rash spots (petechiae)
- cough or wheezing
- muscle cramps or sudden tightening of the muscles in your hands or feet, or muscle cramps or twitching that you cannot control
- signs of dehydration: decreased urination, dark urine, sunken eyes
- nausea that is not relieved by prescribed medication or that is accompanied by severe abdominal pain
- vomiting more than 5 times in 24 hours
- fatigue that interferes with your ability to care for yourself
- eye irritation, conjunctivitis, and increased production of tears

What Else  
Should I Know  
About  
Panitumumab?

- Get your doctor's permission before taking any aspirin products or getting any vaccines (immunizations)
- Both men and women should use effective birth control to prevent pregnancy during treatment and for 6 months after treatment ends. Call your doctor right away if you or your partner become pregnant during treatment.
- Do not breastfeed during your treatment or for 60 days (2 months) after you stop panitumumab.
- We will monitor your magnesium levels by testing your blood frequently. Keep all appointments with your doctor and laboratory.
- In rare cases, panitumumab may cause a severe or life-threatening *infusion reaction*. We will watch you carefully while you are receiving your medication. Tell your nurse immediately if you have any of the signs of an allergic reaction listed above or if you feel faint, have blurred vision, or nausea. If you have a reaction, we will stop the infusion and treat your symptoms. If you have this reaction, you may not be able to receive this medication again, or you may need a lower dose.
- If you would like more information about panitumumab, talk to your doctor.