

Docetaxel

Names	The generic drug name is docetaxel (doe-se-TAKS-sel). Taxotere® is a brand name. There may be other names for this medication.
Why am I Receiving Docetaxel and How is It Administered?	Docetaxel is used to treat breast, metastatic prostate, advanced stomach, head and neck, and non-small cell lung cancers. This medicine is given intravenously (IV), which means it is given through a thin tube placed in a vein, usually in your arm, wrist, hand, or chest.
How Does it Work?	<p>Cancer is a group of diseases in which abnormal cells multiply (reproduce) without control. Both normal and cancer cells go through cycles of multiplying, growing, and resting. Your chemotherapy schedule, usually given in <i>cycles</i>, is based upon the type of cancer you have, how fast your cancer cells multiply, and when each drug is the most likely to be effective.</p> <p>The faster cells are multiplying, the more likely it is that chemotherapy will damage or kill those cells. Unfortunately, normal cells that reproduce quickly (cells lining the digestive tract (mouth, stomach, intestines), hair follicles, and blood cells) are also affected. These normal cells will eventually grow back and be healthy. During treatment, however, you may have side effects.</p> <p>Docetaxel is in a class of drugs known as taxanes or plant alkaloids. It affects tiny structures (microtubules) inside the cells and interferes with their ability to make the proteins they need and to reproduce.</p>
What Should I Tell My Doctor Before I Begin?	<p>Tell your doctor if you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• are allergic reaction to docetaxel or polysorbate 80• have or have had liver disease• have ever been treated with cisplatin or carboplatin for lung cancer <p>This drug can interact with other medications. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all medications, vitamins, and supplements that you take.</p>
What Are Some Possible Side Effects?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low white blood cell, red blood cell, and platelet counts, which increase your risk of infection, fatigue, and bleeding (low platelets are less common)• Numbness and tingling in fingers and toes (peripheral neuropathy)• Fluid retention: swelling in ankles or abdominal area, weight gain (You may be given prednisone to help prevent fluid retention.)

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- Nausea (more common), vomiting (less common)
- Diarrhea
- Mouth or throat sores, changes in taste
- Hair loss
- Fatigue, weakness
- Nail and skin changes
- Infection
- Birth defects
- Muscle/joint/bone pain (less common)
- Higher results on blood tests measuring liver function (will return to normal when treatment ends) (less common)

How Can I Manage These Side Effects?

- **Drink 2-3 quarts of water every day unless your doctor tells you to limit your fluids.** This is even more important in the days before and after you have chemotherapy. 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. Broths are a good source of sodium, and some sports drinks provide additional electrolytes (check the labels).
- 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.
- 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.
- If platelet count is low, be careful when handling sharp objects. Avoid rough sports or other situations that could cause bruising or injury. Use an electric razor.
- Ask your doctor about medication to help prevent or lessen nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or constipation.
- Mouth care: To minimize mouth problems, rinse your mouth with a mixture of ½ tsp of baking soda in 8 ounce 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 containing alcohol.
- Skin care: Avoid sun exposure. Wear sunblock with SPF 30 or higher and protective clothing. If you get a rash, do not put anything on it unless your doctor says it is OK. Keep the area clean and dry.
- Diarrhea: Loperamide (Imodium®) is available over the counter. You can take 2

tablets after the first episode of diarrhea, followed by 1 tablet (2mg) after each loose stool as needed. Do not take more than 8 tablets (16mg) in a 24-hour period. Call the clinic if this does not provide relief within 24 hours.

- Birth defects: Though chemo may affect fertility, do not assume you cannot get pregnant or father a child when receiving chemo. Both men and women should use effective, reliable birth control. Barrier methods, such as condoms and diaphragms, are recommended. This drug may be harmful to a fetus.
- Do not breastfeed during chemotherapy. Talk to your doctor for details.
- Aches and pains: Check with your doctor before taking any medication or product for this or any other side effect.

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; hives.

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

Call your doctor immediately if you have:

- signs 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
- signs of fluid retention: Swelling of the hands, feet, ankles, lower legs, or stomach area; sudden weight gain; shortness of breath; chest pain,; cough; hiccups; breathing very fast; pounding heartbeat; pale/greyish skin. (Docetaxel may cause a serious/life-threatening build-up of fluid, which usually starts around the 5th treatment cycle.)
- unusual bruising or bleeding: Bleeding for more than 10-15 minutes or causing dizziness; black/bloody stools; bloody or coffee ground vomit; blood in your urine or mucus, unusually heavy menstrual bleeding, spontaneous gum or nosebleed; petechiae (red/purple pinpoint-sized spots on skin)

Call your doctor as soon as possible if you have:

- uncontrolled nausea, vomiting, or mouth sores not relieved by prescribed medication or that prevents you from eating or drinking
- weight gain of over 5 pounds in 1 week or diarrhea
- changes in the appearance of your fingernails or toenails
- mild swelling in your hands or feet
- muscle pain

What Else
Should I Know
About
Docetaxel?

- diarrhea of 4 stools a day or diarrhea with weakness/lightheadedness
- Docetaxel injection may cause severe allergic reactions. Call your doctor immediately if you have any of the signs of allergic reaction listed above.
- You will need to have routine blood tests while you are receiving this medicine. Keep all appointments with your doctor and lab.
- If you would like more information about docetaxel, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.