Mesna

Brand Names
Mesnex® (There may be other brand names for this medication)

How is it Administered?
Mesna can be injected into a vein or the liquid can be mixed in juice and taken by mouth.

What is it Used For?
Mesna can be injected into a vein or the liquid can be mixed in juice and taken by mouth. It is also available as a pill, but it is suggested the pill be taken with a very strong-tasting liquid.

How Does Mesna Work?
Mesna is in a class of drugs called chemoprotentives because its purpose is to protect or minimize serious side effects of some chemotherapy drugs. They do not prevent all chemotherapy side effects, and they can have side effects of their own, so you and your doctor will need to discuss the risks of benefits specific to your circumstances.

Mesna is not active in your blood; it becomes active in your kidneys. It is then carried into the bladder. In the bladder, it provides protection from, or at least a reduction of, the toxic effects of the by-products of two chemotherapy drugs: ifosfamide and cyclophosphamide.

What Should I Tell My Doctor Before I Begin Receiving Mesna?
Tell your doctor if you:
- have had an allergic reaction to mesna
- have or have ever had liver or kidney disease
- are pregnant or breast-feeding
- are taking Coumadin® (warfarin) or any medications that may affect bleeding

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.

What Are Some Possible Side Effects I May Experience?
- Bad taste in the mouth
- Diarrhea or soft stools
- Headache
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Fatigue
How Can I Manage These Side Effects?

- Ask your doctor about medication to help prevent or lessen nausea and vomiting.
- If taken by mouth recommend taking with strong tasting liquid, carbonated beverage, juice or milk.
- Drink at least two to three quarts of fluid every 24 hours, unless you are instructed otherwise.
- It is important to void (empty your bladder) frequently especially in the first 24 hours after taking chemotherapy. Report any pain or burning on urination to your health care provider.
- To reduce nausea, take anti-nausea medications as prescribed by your doctor, and eat small, frequent meals.
- Spacing out daily activities can help with fatigue. Accept assistance and delegate responsibilities as possible.

When Should I Call the Doctor?

Call your doctor immediately if you experience:

- any sign of allergic reaction: rash, hives, or severe skin rash; difficulty breathing or shortness of breath; swelling of your lips, throat, or inside of your mouth; dizziness or fainting

Call your doctor as soon as possible if you experience:

- nausea that is not relieved by prescribed medication or that interferes with your ability to eat or drink
- vomiting more than 4-5 times in a 24 hour period
- diarrhea (4-6 episodes in a 24-hour period)
- blood, pain, or burning when you urinate

What Else Should I Know About Mesna?

- Do not have any vaccinations (flu shots) while taking this drug unless you talk to you doctor first.
- Do not take aspirin, or products containing aspirin unless you first get your doctor’s permission.
- Do not conceive a child (get pregnant) while taking mesna. Barrier methods of contraception, such as condoms, are recommended. Discuss with your doctor when you may safely become pregnant or conceive a child after therapy.
- Do not breast feed while taking this medication.
- If you would like more information about mesna, talk to your doctor.