Mitomycin (mye-toe-MYE-sin)

How is it Administered?
Your medicine will be given intravenously (IV), which means it will be given through a tube placed in a vein, usually in your arm, wrist, hand or chest. It can also be injected into a muscle (intramuscular).

What is it Used For?
This drug is used to treat several types of cancer including adenomas of the stomach and pancreas and colon; squamous cell carcinoma of the head and neck, lungs, and cervix; duct cell carcinoma of the breast; and bladder cancer.

How Does Mitomycin Work?
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.

The faster cells are dividing (reproducing), the more likely it is that chemotherapy will damage/kill the cells. Unfortunately, chemotherapy does not know the difference between cancer cells and normal cells that reproduce frequently. The cells in your body that are the most likely to be affected by chemotherapy are the cells that line the digestive tract (mouth, stomach, intestines), hair follicles, and blood cells.

These normal cells will eventually grow back and be healthy. During treatment, however, you may experience side effects from the chemotherapy’s effects cells.

Mitomycin is an antibiotic that is only used to treat cancer. It acts upon/interferes with the cells during certain phases of the cells’ cycles and slows or stops the growth of cancer.
What Should I Tell My Doctor Before I Begin Receiving Mitomycin?

Tell your doctor if you:
- Have had an allergic reaction to mitomycin
- Have a bleeding or blood-clotting problem
- Are pregnant or breastfeeding

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?

- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Loss of appetite
- Thinned or brittle hair
- Mouth sores
- Fatigue
- Bladder inflammation

How Can I Manage These Side Effects?

- Ask your doctor about medication to help prevent or lessen nausea, vomiting, or mouth or throat soreness.
- 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.
- Try to eat soft foods, and avoid eating salty foods.
- Talk to your doctor or nurse about obtaining a wig before hair loss begins.

When Should I Call the Doctor?

Call your doctor immediately if you experience:
- any sign of infection: fever of 100.5°F (38°C) or higher, chills, cough, sore throat, burning or pain upon urination, or redness, swelling, or pain at the injection site
- any sign of an allergic reaction: itching or hives, swelling in your face or hands, swelling or tingling in your mouth or throat, chest tightness, trouble breathing, dizziness or palpitations
- Unusual bruising or bleeding
- Coughing or difficulty breathing
- Swelling of feet, ankles, hands or feet
- Decrease in urine (urinating less than one cup daily)
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 and drinking
- Headache that is not relieved by prescribed medication

What Else Should I Know About Mitomycin?

- You should not use aspirin or any product that has aspirin it (such as some cold medicines) unless you have talked to your doctor.

- Mitomycin may cause bone marrow depression, reduced number of red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets, resulting in an increased risk for fatigue, infection, and bleeding. To help avoid infections, stay away from crowds or people with colds, flu, or other infections. Be careful when handling sharp objects, use an electric razor. Stay away from rough sports or other situations where you could be bruised, cut, or injured. Wash your hands often. Do not get any immunizations unless you first get your doctor’s permission.

- Mitomycin may interfere with the normal menstrual cycle in women and may stop sperm production in men. Do not, however, assume that you cannot get pregnant or that you cannot get someone else pregnant. Use a reliable method of birth control to prevent pregnancy because mitomycin may harm the fetus.

- This drug can cause kidney damage. Your doctor will order certain lab tests to check your response to mitomycin.

- Do not breastfeed while you are being given this medicine.

- If you have your treatments at home, you may need to store your medicine. Keep the medicine away from heat and light.

- Mitomycin has been linked to two rare, but serious conditions, lung problems such as pneumonitis and pulmonary fibrosis and hemolytic uremic syndrome. Your doctor will monitor you closely while you are taking mitomycin.

- If you would like more information about mitomycin, talk to your doctor.