**Patient Education**

**Panitumumab (pan i toom' ue mab)**

**Brand Names**

Vectibix® (There may be other names for this medication)

**How is Panitumumab Administered?**

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 it Works”) 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 Receiving 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, herbal or diet supplements that you are taking.

**What Are Some Possible Side Effects I May Experience?**

- Skin problems such as redness, itching, rash, dry skin, and increased sensitivity to sunlight (may worsen skin problems)
- Tiredness or weakness
- Abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting
Diarrhea and/or constipation
Mouth sores, which could make eating and swallowing painful
Eye irritation
Pain or difficulty eating or swallowing
Increased skin sensitivity to sunlight

How Can I Manage These Side Effects?

- Avoid unnecessary or prolonged exposure to sunlight. Wear protective clothing, a hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen with SPF of 30 or higher.
- 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 and vomiting.
- Drink a lot of fluids (2-3 quarts per day), especially water, every day, unless otherwise directed by your doctor.
- 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 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.

When Should I Call the Doctor?

Call your doctor immediately if you experience:
- any sign of an allergic reaction: itching or hives, difficulty swallowing or breathing, swelling in your face or hands, swelling or tingling in your mouth or throat, chest tightness, shortness of breath, dizziness, or palpitations (rapid heartbeat)
- any sign of infection: fever of 100.5°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 lasting more than 10-15 minutes or that causes dizziness; black or bloody stools; bloody vomit (looks like coffee grounds), stools, urine, or phlegm; unusually heavy menstrual bleeding, spontaneous bleeding from gums or nose, or a rash of pinpoint-sized reddish-purple 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
- decreased urination, your urine becomes dark yellow, or you have sunken eyes (may be signs of dehydration)

Call your doctor as soon as possible if you have:
- 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
• Swelling of your hands or feet
• Eye discomfort from irritation, conjunctivitis, and increased production of tears

What Else Should I Know About Panitumumab?

• Do not take any products that contain aspirin unless you get your doctor’s permission first.
• Check with your doctor before getting any type of vaccination or immunization such as a flu shot.
• Both men and women should use effective birth control to prevent pregnancy during treatment and for 6 months after treatment ends. If you become pregnant or father a child while on panitumumab, call your doctor right away.
• Do not breastfeed during your treatment or for 60 days (2 months) after you stop panitumumab.
• Panitumumab may cause the magnesium levels in your blood to fall abnormally low, a condition called hypomagnemia. We will monitor your magnesium levels by testing your blood frequently. Keep all appointments with your doctor and the laboratory.
• Panitumumab may cause severe skin reactions, which can turn into serious infections and cause death. Call your doctor immediately if you have pimples; itching or redness of the skin; peeling, dry, or cracked skin; or redness or swelling around the fingernails or toenails.
• 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 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.