Altretamine (Hexalen®)
(“al TRET a meen”)

How drug is given: By mouth

Purpose: Stops growth of cancer cells in ovarian cancer and other cancers

How to take the drug by mouth

- Take this medication after meals and at bedtime to avoid nausea and vomiting.
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as possible. However, if it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular dosing schedule. Do not double dose.
- Altretamine can interfere with some drugs, which may change how this works in your body. Talk with your doctor before starting any new drugs, including over-the-counter drugs, natural products, herbals or vitamins.

Storage

- Store this medicine at room temperature, away from heat, moisture, and direct light. Keep this medicine in its original container, out of reach of children and pets.

Things that may occur during treatment

1. You may have nausea, vomiting, and/or loss of appetite. Nausea and vomiting may begin soon after the drug is given and may last more than 24 hours. Drugs to help with this will be given to you.

2. Loose stools or diarrhea may occur within a few days after the drug is started. You may take loperamide (Imodium A-D®) to help control diarrhea. You may buy this at most drug stores. It is also important to drink more fluids (water, juice, sports drinks). If these do not help, tell your doctor or nurse.

3. You may get mouth sores 7 to 10 days after this drug is started. It is important to keep your mouth clean. A soft-bristle toothbrush should be used for brushing your teeth. You may have a burning feeling and redness inside the mouth or on the lips. Use a baking soda mouth rinse 4 or 5 times a day.
Other mouth rinses may be ordered by your doctor. Do not use mouth washes that have alcohol in them because they will dry out the mouth. If you cannot eat or swallow because of this, let your doctor or nurse know. Check with your doctor before having any dental work done.

4. Your blood cell counts may drop. This is known as bone marrow suppression. This includes a decrease in your:
   - Red blood cells, which carry oxygen in your body to help give you energy
   - White blood cells, which fight infection in your body
   - Platelets, which help clot the blood to stop bleeding

   If you have a **fever of 100.5°F (39°C) or higher**, chills, a cough, or any bleeding problems, **tell your doctor or nurse right away**.

5. You may lose some feeling, or have tingling or burning in your hands and/or feet. This is called peripheral neuropathy. This may increase with continued treatment. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you have trouble buttoning your clothes. Peripheral neuropathy should get better over time when the drug is stopped.

6. Patients receiving moderate to high doses may experience tiredness, dizziness, or problems with balance or walking. **Tell your doctor or nurse right away** if you notice any of these symptoms.

7. It is very important to use birth control if you are having sex since this drug may be harmful to an unborn baby. Women should not breast-feed while receiving altretamine. If you are concerned about any of this, please talk with your doctor or nurse.

The above information includes some, but not necessarily all, of the possible side effects of this medication. The side effects in this teaching sheet may not be the same ones you experience. Your side effects may be different, depending on how often you receive treatment (your schedule) and how much you receive each time (your dosage). Side effects may also vary if you take other medications. Please talk with your doctor or nurse if you have questions about possible side effects you may experience. This document should not take the place of conversations with members of your health care team.

If you experience any significant change in your health during or after treatment, contact a member of your health care team right away.

Managing your oral chemotherapy schedule at home can be challenging. To help you with this, there are tools to help you keep track of your schedule and any side effects you may have. You can find these at [www.dana-farber.org/OralChemoDiary](http://www.dana-farber.org/OralChemoDiary).