How this drug is given: By mouth

Purpose: To kill cancer cells in lymphoma, Hodgkin disease, brain tumors, and other cancers

How to take the drug by mouth

• Swallow each capsule whole; do not open or chew. If you have trouble swallowing the capsule, the pharmacist will give you specific instructions.

• 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.

• An unsafe rise in blood pressure may occur if procarbazine is given with drinks or foods that contain a high amount of a product called tyramine. AVOID these drinks and foods: beer, wine, coffee, cola, yogurt, yeast, ripe cheese, aged cheese, pickled herring, beef liver, chicken liver, canned figs, bananas, avocados, and chocolate. Please ask your nurse to contact a Dana-Farber nutritionist if you have any questions about foods that contain tyramine.

• A serious reaction has been known to occur when procarbazine is combined with alcohol. Headaches, nausea, vomiting, breathing difficulties, chest pain, weakness, blurred vision, and confusion have all been reported. You should not drink any alcoholic beverages while on this drug therapy.

• Women who are pregnant or of childbearing age should use gloves when handling this drug.

• Procarbazine can interfere with many 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 excess heat and moisture. Keep this medicine in its original container, out of the reach of children and pets.
Things that may occur during treatment

1. You may have nausea and vomiting. Nausea may start 12 to 24 hours after the drug is given and may last more than 24 hours. Drugs to help with this will be given to you.

2. 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.**

3. Restlessness, sedation, depression or confusion can occur. You may notice a change in your mood. Notify your doctor or nurse if you experience any of these symptoms after starting the drug.

4. 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.

   **Mouth Rinse Recipe:**
   Mix: 1 tsp salt or baking soda with 8 oz. glass of water

   Other mouth rinses may be ordered by your doctor. **Avoid** commercial mouthwashes, because they often **contain alcohol**, which causes dryness in 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.

5. Your skin may be more sensitive in the sun. Use a sunscreen of SPF 30 or greater when you go outside. Do not go to tanning booths.

6. Flu-like symptoms such as fever, chills, headache, muscle and/or joint aches are common. If these occur, your doctor may suggest taking acetaminophen (Tylenol®) to help control the symptoms. Please let your doctor or nurse know if acetaminophen (Tylenol®) does not help, since other medications may be prescribed.

7. Some or all of your hair may fall out around 3 to 4 weeks after treatment starts. You may lose hair on your head as well as facial and body hair. You may want to buy a wig before hair loss begins. Hair may grow back during treatment.

8. **Fertility:**
   • It is very important to use birth control if you are having sex, because this drug could be harmful to an unborn baby.
• Men may become sterile and may want to think about sperm banking prior to chemotherapy.
• For women, your period (menstrual cycle) may not be regular for a while or may stop completely and you may not be able to get pregnant. If you are concerned about any of this, please talk with your doctor or nurse.

9. In very rare cases, you could get a second cancer years after taking procarbazine.

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, consider using tools to help you keep track of your schedule and any side effects you may have. You can find these tools online at www.dana-farber.org/OralChemoDiary.