



## Arsenic Trioxide (Trisenox®)

("AR-se-nik-tri-OKS-ide")

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**How this drug is given:** by vein (IV)

**Purpose:** to treat a specific cancer of the blood cells called Acute Promyelocytic Leukemia (APL) and other cancer types

### Things that may occur during or within hours of treatment

1. Your blood pressure may drop or your heart rate may slow down while you are getting this drug. This usually goes back to normal on its own. It's important to ask for assistance and take your time when you stand up during or after your treatment. You might feel lightheaded or dizzy.
2. You may have a fast or unusual heartbeat or chest pain. If you feel any changes in your heartbeat, tell your cancer care team **right away**.

### Things that may occur a few days to weeks later

1. You may have nausea, vomiting, and/or loss of appetite. Nausea and vomiting may begin after the drug is given and may last more than 24 hours. You may be given medicine to help with this.
2. Your blood cell counts may drop. This is known as bone marrow suppression. This includes a decrease in :
  - 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

This may happen 7 to 14 days after the drug is given and then blood counts should return to normal. If you have a **fever of 100.5°F (38°C) or higher**, chills, a cough, or any bleeding problems, **call your cancer care team right away**.

3. Some patients may feel very tired, also known as fatigue. You may need to rest or take naps more often. Mild to moderate exercise can also help you maintain your energy. You may also feel less interested in your usual activities.
4. 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 can buy this at most drug stores. Be sure to also drink more fluids (water, juice, sports drinks). If these do not help within 24 hours, **call your cancer care team**.

5. Your body may not be able to get rid of extra fluid. This is called edema. You may notice some swelling in your arms or legs.
6. If you have an ongoing fever of 100.5°F (38°C) or higher, make sure you are drinking plenty of fluids. If you become dizzy or lightheaded, call your cancer care team right away.
7. If you develop a new or worsening cough or shortness of breath, tell your cancer care team.
8. 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 cancer care team if you have trouble buttoning your clothes. Peripheral neuropathy should get better over time, after the drug is stopped. Take care when handling sharp objects, use handrails to avoid falls, and wear supportive shoes.
9. You may get a headache. Please talk to your cancer care team about what you can take for this.
10. You may have difficulty sleeping. Please talk to your cancer care team if you cannot sleep.
11. Some important minerals called electrolytes are found in your blood and body fluids. They can be affected by this medicine. Your cancer care team will check your blood periodically to monitor your potassium and magnesium levels.
12. Your liver may be affected by this medicine. On occasion, blood work will be taken to monitor your liver function.
13. You may feel pain or weakness in your joints or muscles. If these bother you, ask your cancer care team what type of drugs you may use to help with this pain.

## Things that may occur after treatment ends (even months to years later)

### Fertility and Related Precautions:

- It is very important to use birth control if you are having sex, because this drug may be harmful to an unborn baby.
- Women should not breastfeed while receiving this drug.
- If you are concerned about any of this, please talk with your cancer care team.

*This document includes some but not necessarily all of the possible side effects of this medication. The side effects listed 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 are taking other medications. Please speak 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.*