



## Azacitidine (Vidaza®)

("ay-za-SYE-ti-deen")

**How drug is given:** Injection into the vein (IV) or into the skin (SC)

**Purpose:** To treat myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS) and certain leukemias, by slowing the growth of cancer cells

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

1. Mild to moderate nausea, vomiting, and loss of appetite may occur. You may be given medicine to help with this.
2. If the drug is being injected into the skin, you may have pain or develop redness or bruising at the site.

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

1. 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 (38°C) or higher**, chills, a cough, or any bleeding problems, **tell your cancer care team right away.**
2. You may feel very tired, also known as fatigue. Over time, fatigue could worsen and you may feel physically weak or exhausted. This can be unrelated to activity. You may need to rest or take naps more often. Mild to moderate exercise can help you maintain energy.
3. You may get mouth sores 7 to 10 days after this drug is given. 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. Do not use mouthwashes that have alcohol in them, because they will dry out the mouth. If you cannot eat or swallow because of this, tell your cancer care team. Check with your cancer care team before any dental work is done.

3. Mild constipation may occur after treatment begins. Please increase your fluid intake and increase fiber in your diet by eating fresh fruits and vegetables. A daily stool softener, such as docusate (Colace®), and/or laxatives, such as senna (Senakot®), may be helpful. If these do not help within 48 hours, tell your cancer care team. Do not use bulk-forming laxatives, such as Metamucil®, without first talking with your cancer care team.
4. Loose stools or diarrhea may occur within 3 days after the drug is given. You may take loperamide (Imodium A-D®) to help control diarrhea. You can 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 cancer care team.
5. Skin changes, such as dryness or a rash on your body, may occur. Ask your cancer care team about what lotions or creams you may use.
6. If you develop a new or worsening cough or shortness of breath, tell your cancer care team.
7. You may feel pain or weakness in your joints or muscles. If these bother you, ask your cancer care team what kind of drugs you may use to help with this pain.
8. You may get a headache. Please ask your cancer care team what you can take for this.

## 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 could be harmful to an unborn baby.
- Women should not breast-feed while receiving this drug.
- If you are concerned about any of this, please talk with your cancer care team.

*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 cancer care team if you have questions about possible side effects you may experience.*

*This document should not take the place of conversations with members of your cancer care team. If you experience any significant change in your health during or after treatment, contact a member of your cancer care team right away.*



THIS SPACE RESERVED FOR WRITTEN COMMENTS OR NOTES FOR THE PATIENT AND FAMILY: