Carmustine (BiCNU®)
(“CAR-muss-teen”)

How drug is given: by vein (IV)


Things that may occur during or within hours of treatment

1. Facial flushing (warmth or redness of the face), itching, or a skin rash could occur after taking carmustine. These symptoms are due to an allergic response and should be reported to your cancer care team right away.

2. You may have nausea and/or vomiting. Nausea and vomiting can begin one to three hours after the drug is given and may last more than 24 hours. Drugs to help you with this will be given.

3. You may have redness in your eyes. This may look like pink eye, but without swelling or an infection. This is usually temporary. It can occur within 2 hours of the infusion and last 4-5 hours.

4. Care is taken to prevent this drug from leaking into nearby tissue. If the drug leaks, this is called extravasation, and it can cause harm. If you feel warmth, burning, or tingling in the area of your IV, tell your cancer care team right away.

   Swelling, redness, blisters or bruising around the area of the IV or port may occur one or two weeks after getting this drug. Call your cancer care team immediately if you experience any of these symptoms.

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
This may happen 4 to 6 weeks after the drug is given and the blood counts should return to normal. If you have a fever of 100.5°F (39°C) or higher, chills, a cough, or any bleeding problems, tell your cancer care team right away.

2. 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.

3. Call your doctor right away if you have chest pain that worsens with coughing or if you have deep breaths, shortness of breath, cough, or fever.

4. Skin color can turn a darker color. There may be redness over areas where you had radiation therapy. Sunlight may cause your skin to burn easier. Use a sunscreen of SPF 30 or greater.

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

- Fertility:
  - It is very important to use birth control if you are having sex, because this drug could harm an unborn baby.
  - Men can 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 cancer care team.

*The above information 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 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.*