



Chemotherapy: Carmustine (BiCNU®)

Pronounced: "CAR-muss-teen"

How drug is given: By vein (IV)

Purpose: To stop the growth of cancer cells in brain tumors, multiple myeloma, Hodgkin lymphoma, and non-Hodgkin lymphoma.

Things that may occur during or within hours of treatment

- Mild warmth or redness of the face, itching, or a skin rash could occur. These symptoms are due to an allergic response and should be reported to your cancer care team **right away**.
- 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. You may be given medicine to help with this.
- 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.
- 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 nurse 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

- Your blood cell counts may drop. This is known as bone marrow suppression. This may happen 5 to 6 weeks after the drug is given and then blood counts should return to normal. 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
 - 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**.
- Some patients may feel very tired, also known as fatigue. You may need to rest or take naps more often. Mild to moderate exercise may help you maintain your energy.

- 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.
- If you develop a new or worsening cough or shortness of breath, tell your cancer care team.
- Skin changes, such as dryness, rash, or darkening of skin color, can occur on your body. There may be redness and pain over areas where you have gotten radiation therapy. Sunlight may cause your skin to burn easier, so be sure to use a sunscreen of SPF 30 or greater when you go outside. Do not go to tanning booths.

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

Sexual health and reproductive concerns

If you are concerned about any of this, please talk with your cancer care team.

Women

- It is not safe to take this medicine during pregnancy. It could harm an unborn baby.
- It is very important to use birth control if you are having sex, because this drug could harm an unborn baby.
- 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.
- Women should not breastfeed while receiving this drug.

Men

- It is very important to use birth control if you are having sex with a woman of child-bearing age, because this drug could harm an unborn baby.
- Men can become sterile and may want to consider sperm banking prior to treatment.

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.