



Chemotherapy: Decitabine (Dacogen®)

Pronounced: "de-SYE-ta-been"

How drug is given: By vein (IV)

Purpose: To stop the growth of cancer cells in myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS) and other types of leukemia and bone marrow disorders

Things that may occur during or within hours of treatment

- Some patients may have mild nausea. You may be given medicine to help with this.
- You may have redness or burning where the drug is being given in your vein.

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 7 to 14 days after the drug is given and then blood counts should return to normal. 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.**

- 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. It is also important to drink more fluids (water, juice, sports drinks). If these do not help, tell your doctor or nurse.
- 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 doctor or nurse. Do not use bulk forming laxatives such as Metamucil® without talking with your doctor or nurse.
- If you develop a new or worsening cough or shortness of breath, report this to your doctor or nurse.
- You may get a headache. Please talk to your doctor or nurse about what you can take for this.
- 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.
- Skin changes, such as dryness or a rash on your body, may occur. Ask your doctor or nurse what lotions or creams you may use.
- You may have difficulty sleeping. Please talk to your doctor or nurse if you cannot sleep.

DECITABINE

- This drug may cause a change in your blood sugar levels. Normal levels usually return after treatment is stopped.
- You may feel pain or weakness in your joints or muscles. This may happen about 2 to 3 days after you get your decitabine. If these bother you, ask your doctor or nurse what type of drugs you may use to help with this pain.
- 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 work periodically to monitor your potassium, magnesium and sodium levels.

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

Sexual health and fertility

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

Women

- It is very important to use birth control while taking this drug and for at least one month after your last dose if you are having sex, because this drug may be harmful to an unborn baby.
- 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 sperm banking prior to treatment.

The information in this document includes some, but not necessarily all, of the possible side effects of this medication. The side effects listed here 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.