



Doxorubicin (Adriamycin®) (*"doks-oh-ROO-bi-sin"*)

How drug is given: by vein (IV)

Purpose: To treat leukemia, lymphoma, breast cancer, ovarian cancer, sarcoma, neuroblastoma, lung cancer, bladder cancer, thyroid cancer, gastric cancer, and other cancers

Things that may occur during or within hours of treatment

1. You may have nausea, vomiting, and/or loss of appetite. Nausea and vomiting may begin one to three hours after the drug is given and may last more than 24 hours. You may be given medicine to help with this.
2. Your urine may turn orange or red, which may last 1 to 2 days after the drug is given. This happens because the drug is red and it leaves your body in the urine.
3. Care is taken to prevent this drug from leaking into nearby tissue. If the drug leaks this is called an extravasation and it can cause harm. If you feel warmth, burning or tingling around your IV, please **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.**

4. Loose stools or diarrhea may occur 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 important to drink more fluids (water, juice, sports drinks). If these do not help, tell your doctor or nurse.
5. 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 be helpful in maintaining your energy.

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:
 - 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**.

2. 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.
3. Skin changes, such as skin turning a darker color, can happen. There may be redness and pain over areas where you have gotten radiation therapy. Ask your cancer care team what lotions or creams you may use. Sunlight may cause your skin to burn easier so use a sunscreen of SPF 30 or greater when you go outside. Do not go to tanning booths.

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

1. This drug may affect your heart. This is usually linked to the total amount of drug that you are given over time. Your heart function will be followed. You should tell your cancer care team if you are coughing, have trouble breathing, have chest pain, and/or have swelling in the feet or ankles.
2. Fertility and Related Precautions
 - It is still very important to use birth control if you are having sex since this drug may be harmful to 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.
3. In rare cases, you may be at risk of getting another type of cancer after getting doxorubicin.

The above information includes some, but 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 about your treatment and side effects you may experience during and after treatment. 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: