



Fludarabine (Fludara®)

("floo-DARE-a-bean")

How drug is given: By vein (IV)

Purpose: To treat leukemia and other cancers

Things that may occur during or within hours of treatment

- Mild to moderate nausea, vomiting, and loss of appetite may occur. You may be given medicine to help with this.

Things that may occur a few days to weeks later

- 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 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**.

- If you have an ongoing fever of 100.5 F (38C) or higher, be sure to drink plenty of fluids. If you become dizzy or lightheaded, call your cancer care team right away.
- You may get mouth sores 7 to 10 days after this drug is given. Be sure to keep your mouth clean. Use a soft-bristle toothbrush for brushing your teeth. You may have a burning feeling and redness inside the mouth or on the lips. Use a salt or 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 mouth washes that have alcohol in them because they will dry out the mouth. If you cannot eat or swallow because of this, let your cancer care team know. Check with your doctor before having any dental work done.

- If you develop a new or worsening cough or have shortness of breath, report this to your doctor or nurse.
- Some patients feel very tired after taking this medicine. This is 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.
- You may feel pain or weakness in your joints or muscles. This may happen about 2 to 3 days after you get fludarabine. If this bothers you, talk to your doctor or nurse.
- In rare cases, nerves can be affected by this medicine. This side effect is called progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML). Symptoms include visual changes, headaches, weakness, sleepiness, and confusion. This can happen a few days to one year after starting this medicine. Call your doctor or nurse right away if you have any of these symptoms.

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 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.
 - Women should not breastfeed 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: