



Interferon (Roferon[®], Intron[®])

("in-ter-*FEER*-on")

How this drug is given: by vein (IV)

Purpose: to treat melanoma, renal cell cancer, and other cancers.

Things that may happen during treatment

1. Facial flushing (warmth or redness of the face), itching, or a skin rash could happen. These symptoms are due to an allergic response and should be told to your cancer care team **right away**.
2. Flu-like symptoms, such as fever, chills, headache, muscle and/or joint aches, are common. If these happen, your cancer care team may suggest taking acetaminophen (Tylenol[®]) to help control the symptoms. Please tell your cancer care team if acetaminophen (Tylenol) does not help, since other medications may be prescribed.
3. 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 also help you maintain your energy. You may feel less interested in your usual activities.
4. Mild to moderate nausea, vomiting, and loss of appetite may happen. You may be given medicine to help with this.
5. 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:
 - 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, **call your cancer care team right away**.

6. Loose stools or diarrhea may happen within a few days after the drug is given. You may take loperamide (Imodium A-D[®]) to help control diarrhea. You can buy this at most drug stores. Drink more fluids (water, juice, sports drinks). If these do not help within 24 hours, **call your cancer care team**.

7. Some of your hair may fall out with treatment. You may lose hair on your head as well as facial and body hair. Hair may grow back during treatment.
8. Skin changes, such as dryness or a rash on your body, may happen. Ask your cancer care team what lotions or creams you may use.
9. Restlessness, sedation, depression, or confusion can happen. You may notice a change in your mood. Tell your cancer care team if you have any of these symptoms after starting the drug.
10. If you have trouble sleeping, talk to your cancer care team.

Things that may happen 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 may become sterile and may want to think about sperm banking before 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 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.

THIS SPACE RESERVED FOR WRITTEN COMMENTS OR NOTES FOR THE PATIENT AND FAMILY: