



Ixabepilone (Ixempra®)

("ix-ab-EP-i-lone")

How drug is given: By vein (IV)

Purpose: Treatment of breast cancer

Things that may occur during or within hours of treatment

1. Facial flushing (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**.
2. This medication may cause you to feel drowsy or weak, and affect your ability to drive safely.
3. 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

1. You may lose some feeling, or have tingling or burning, in your hands and/or feet. This is called peripheral neuropathy. This may increase with continued treatment. Please tell your cancer team if you have trouble buttoning your clothes. Peripheral neuropathy should get better over time or when the drug is stopped. Be careful when handling sharp objects, use handrails to avoid falls, and wear supportive shoes.
2. 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. Be sure to drink more fluids (water, juice, or sports drinks). If these do not help within 24 hours, tell your cancer care team.
3. 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
an **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, tell your cancer care team. Ask your doctor before having any dental work done.

4. 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 cancer care team. Do not use bulk-forming laxatives such as Metamucil® without first talking with your cancer care team.
5. The palms of your hands or the soles of your feet may become red and painful. This is called hand-foot syndrome. Tingling and peeling of the skin may occur. Avoid tight fitting shoes. Use thick (moisturizing) creams on hands and feet.
6. You may feel pain or weakness in your joints or muscles. This may happen about 2 to 3 days after you get ixabepilone. This usually gets better in a week or less. If this bothers you, ask your cancer team what type of drugs you may use to help with this pain.
7. 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.
8. 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. After that, 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, **tell your doctor or nurse right away.**

9. 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.
10. Nail changes can occur, such as dark lines or changes in color. Nails may become more brittle. It is possible your nail could fall off. Nails usually return to normal after treatment is finished. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you notice these changes.

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 may be harmful to an unborn baby.
- 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 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: