



Chemotherapy: Pembrolizumab (Keytruda®)

Pronounced: *"pem-broe-LIZ-ue-mab"*

How drug is given: By injection, in a vein (IV)

Purpose: Treats certain cancers of the skin, cervix, endometrium, esophagus, stomach, head and neck, and liver; Hodgkin lymphoma; and other cancers by preventing cancer cells from growing

Things that may occur during or within hours of treatment

- You may have nausea, vomiting, and/or loss of appetite. You may be given medicine to help with this.
- 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**.

Things that may occur a few days to weeks later

- If you develop a new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, or chest pain, report this to your cancer care team right away.
- 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

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**.

- This drug may cause problems with your hormone glands: thyroid, pituitary, and/or adrenal glands. When the hormone glands do not work properly, you may notice these symptoms:
 - feeling tired
 - a fast heartbeat
 - sweat easily
 - weight gain
 - a cold feeling
 - thinning hair
 - constipation
 - voice changes
 - a headache that does not go away

- Your liver may be affected by this medicine. On occasion, blood work will be taken to monitor your liver function.
- 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 help you maintain your energy.
- Skin changes, such as dryness, itching, or a rash on your body, may occur. Ask your cancer care team what lotions or creams you may use.
- You may feel pain or weakness in your joints or muscles. If this bothers you, ask your cancer care team what type of drugs may help.
- This drug may cause a change in your blood sugar and/or triglyceride levels. Normal levels usually return after treatment is stopped.
- 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.
- This drug may cause kidney problems. Your kidneys will be watched closely with blood and urine tests. Watch for changes in the amount of urine and color of your urine.
- This drug may cause severe abdominal pain and loose stools or diarrhea within a few days after treatment. Call your cancer care team if you experience four or more loose bowel movements in one day or if your stool looks black, tarry, or you notice blood.

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

Sexual health and fertility

- It is very important to use birth control if you are having sex, because this drug can 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 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.