



Rituximab (Rituxan®)

("ri-TUK-si-mab")

Rituximab hyaluronidase (Rituxan Hycela®)

("ri-TUK-si-mab hye-al-yoor-ON-i-dase")

This information is about **rituximab** and **rituximab with hyaluronidase**.

How drugs are given: by vein (IV) and subcutaneously (injection under the skin)

Purpose: to stop the growth of cancer cells in non-Hodgkin lymphoma, chronic lymphocytic leukemia, and other cancers

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.** You may also get some swelling of your lips and tongue. These symptoms are due to an allergic response and should be reported to your doctor or nurse **right away**. This is more likely to occur when the drug is given by vein.
2. **Flu-like symptoms, such as fever and chills, may occur 30 minutes to 2 hours after the infusion.** If these occur, your doctor may suggest taking acetaminophen (Tylenol®) to help control the symptoms. Please tell your doctor or nurse if acetaminophen (Tylenol) is not effective, since other drugs may be given. This is more likely to occur when the drug is given by vein.
3. **You may have redness, swelling, or discomfort** when the drug is given by an injection.

Things that may occur a few days to weeks after treatment

1. Rituximab may cause *tumor lysis syndrome* (TLS). This happens because rituximab may destroy a large amount of tumor. When these cancer cells die, they are released into your bloodstream. This can be serious and result in shifts of fluid and minerals, and/or kidney damage or death. This may cause nausea, vomiting, decrease in ability to void, seizures, and changes in heart rate. Your cancer care team will have a specific treatment plan that may include IV fluids and or medicines to help the body clear excess fluids and protect the kidneys.
2. Some patients may have mild nausea. You may be given medicine to help with this.

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 can also be helpful in maintaining your energy.
4. 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**.

1. Avoid taking aspirin, acetaminophen, ibuprofen, and naproxen unless instructed by your doctor. These pain relievers may mask the signs of a fever.
2. You may feel pain or weakness in your joints or muscles. This may happen about 2 to 3 days after you get rituximab. If these bother you, ask your cancer care team what type of drugs you may use to help with this pain.
3. 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 cancer care team 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 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.