



Topotecan (Hycamtin®)

("to-po-TEE-kan")

How drug is given: by vein (IV)

Purpose: to kill cancer cells in ovarian cancer, cervical cancer, lung cancer, 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 after treatment

1. 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, your 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**.

2. You may get mouth sores 7 to 10 days after this drug is given. It is important to keep your mouth clean. Use only 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 **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 mouthwashes 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 you have any dental work done.

3. 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 also drink more fluids (water, juice, sports drinks). If these do not help within 24 hours, **call your cancer care team**.

4. Skin changes, such as dryness or a rash on your body, may occur. Ask your doctor or nurse what lotions or creams you may use.
5. 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.
6. If you develop a new or worsening cough or shortness of breath, tell your cancer care team.
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 may also help you maintain your energy.
8. You may feel pain or weakness in your joints or muscles. If this bothers you, ask your cancer care team what type of drugs you may use to help with this pain.
9. You may get a headache. Please talk to your cancer care team about what you can take for this.

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

Fertility and Related Precautions:

- It is still very important to use birth control if you are having sex, because this drug may be harmful to an unborn baby.
- Men may 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 doctor or nurse.

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

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 doctor or nurse if you have questions about possible side effects you may experience. This document should not take the place of conversations with members of your health 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 health care team right away.

