

**Side Effects****What You Should Do****Prevention****More Common:**

- Fever and chills (often starting three to six hours after injection)

- If not reduced by acetaminophen within 12 to 24 hours, contact your doctor or nurse as soon as possible.

- Acetaminophen - one or two regular strength tablets may be taken before each injection and every four to six hours after, until fever and chills are gone.

- Cough, shortness of breath
- Trouble breathing

- Contact your doctor or nurse IMMEDIATELY. If symptoms are serious, go directly to the nearest local Emergency Department.

- Your doctor will take X-rays and check your lungs at regular clinic visits.

- Nausea, vomiting

- Contact your doctor or nurse if your medication for nausea is not working.

- Use anti-nausea medications as prescribed.

- Sores on the mouth and lips

- Contact your doctor or nurse as soon as you notice sores on mouth or lips.

- Maintain good mouth hygiene. Brush teeth often with a soft toothbrush. Avoid hot, spicy and acidic foods.

- Darkening or thickening of skin
- Rash

- Contact your doctor or nurse if these become troublesome.

- This will slowly return to normal once bleomycin treatment is stopped.

**Less Common:**

- Confusion, faintness, wheezing
- Changes in fingernails

- Contact your doctor or nurse immediately.
- Contact your doctor or nurse if this bothers you.

**Rare:**

- Sudden severe chest pain
- Sudden weakness in arms and legs
- Pain at tumour site
- Swelling and pain in veins

- Go directly to the local Emergency Department.
- Contact your doctor or nurse IMMEDIATELY. If symptoms are serious, go directly to the local Emergency Department.

## Precautions:

- Ask your doctor or pharmacist before using any other medicine, including over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, minerals, and herbal products.
- Tell your doctor or nurse if you are taking the medications phenytoin or digoxin.
- Bleomycin is a chemotherapy drug. Be careful that your family avoids any exposure to the drug from cleaning up if you vomit or have an incontinent accident. Your nurse will give you instructions on how to protect others in your home in case of exposure to the drug through your bodily fluids.
- Problems with lung function can occur months or even years after treatment. Your doctor will check your progress on a regular basis to check for unwanted effects. Chest X-rays may be done from time to time, to monitor effects on your lungs. If you have any breathing problems, you should contact your doctor right away.
- Smoking can also worsen lung problems. If you smoke, you should try to quit.
- It is very important to tell your doctor or nurse if you have medical problems with your kidney, liver or lung disease. Tell your doctor or nurse if you smoke.
- Tell your doctor or dentist before you have any type of surgery (including dental surgery) if you are receiving bleomycin injections.
- Bleomycin may cause TEMPORARY hair loss in some people. Normal hair growth should return after treatment, although it may take several months.
- This drug alone, or in combination with other chemotherapy drugs, may cause fatigue, reduced sex drive, reduced sexual satisfaction and changes to any intimate relationships for both men and women.
- You and your partner should avoid a pregnancy while taking bleomycin. Birth control pills alone may not be effective for contraception. It is important to discuss the most effective birth control with your doctor.
- Bleomycin should not be used if you are pregnant or breast feeding.
- Bleomycin may cause permanent changes in your ability to have children in the future. Ask your doctor or nurse for more information.

This information sheet does not contain all known information about this drug  
For more information on this medication, please call your doctor, pharmacist or nurse

(Phone Number for your Doctor or Nurse)

Or call the Canadian Cancer Society's  
Cancer Information Service at  
**1-888-939-3333**  
or at  
**www.cancer.ca**

Collaborative Project of:  
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Visit our Web site at: [www.cancercare.ns.ca](http://www.cancercare.ns.ca)

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## MEDICATION INFO SHEET

# **BLEOMYCIN** **(blee-oh-MY-sin)**

### Other names for this medication:

Blenoxane® (Brand Name) Other generic products available

### Appearance:

Injection: Clear, colourless liquid for injection into the bloodstream.

### Why this medication is used:

Bleomycin is used in combination with other medications to treat many different types of cancer, such as Hodgkin's disease, lymphomas, head and neck cancers, testicular cancer, or other types of cancer.

### How do you take this medication:

Injection: Your chemotherapy nurse will inject the medication into your bloodstream over a few minutes. You may also be given a small test dose of bleomycin on your first treatment day, to see how your body reacts to this medication.



New Brunswick  
Nouveau Brunswick