

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

- Signs of infection/ fever, chills, cough
- Low white blood cells

- Keep a thermometer at home. Recognize the signs of infection.
- If your temperature is over 38°C or 100°F, go directly to the local Emergency Department. You may have an infection and need antibiotics.

- Limit contact with people who are sick or have colds. Rest often. Wash your hands often.

- Shortness of breath
- Trouble breathing

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

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

- Nausea and vomiting

- If vomiting is severe, contact your doctor or nurse right away.
- If you vomit within one hour of taking antiemetic tablets, you may take another dose of the antiemetic tablets. A suppository may be ordered if you cannot keep the tablets down.

- Your doctor can order medicine for nausea and vomiting. Continue drinking clear fluids. Get fresh air and rest.

- Dizziness, loss of coordination
- Abdominal pain

- Contact your doctor or nurse as soon as possible

- Bruising or bleeding
- Black, tar-like bowel movements
- Red spots on skin
- Low platelet count
- Pain or redness near needle site during injection

- If bleeding or bruising is unusual or will not stop, contact your doctor or nurse immediately or go directly to the local Emergency Department.
- Do not take ASA (Aspirin®); use acetaminophen (Tylenol®) instead.
- Contact your doctor or nurse right away if you feel pain or discomfort while in the hospital or clinic.

- Use sharp objects with care. Use a soft toothbrush. Be careful when shaving. Tell your doctor before any dental work is done.

Less Common:

- Sores in mouth and on 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.

- Skin rash, flushing of face
- Discolouration along area of injection
- Unusual tiredness

- Contact your doctor or nurse as soon as possible.

- Diarrhea

- If symptoms are severe, call your doctor or nurse right away. For less severe diarrhea, contact your doctor or nurse if it lasts longer than 24 to 48 hours, or if you feel weak. Be sure to drink plenty of fluids.

- Limit hot, spicy, and fried foods; limit foods and drinks with caffeine.
- Avoid high fibre foods, such as bran, nuts, fruits and vegetables

- Weakness
- Constipation

- Contact your doctor or nurse if these bother you.

- Hair loss (from head and body)

- A wig, hat, cap, scarf or hair piece may be worn.
- Your hair will regrow, once all of your treatments are over.

Rare:

- Decrease in amount of urine
- Swelling of feet and lower legs

- Contact your doctor or nurse as soon as possible.

Precautions:

- Tell your doctor or nurse if you are taking the medications cimetidine, digoxin or phenytoin.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist before using any other medicine, including over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, minerals, and herbal products.
- Carmustine 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.
- Tell your doctor or nurse if you have had chickenpox (or recent exposure to someone with chickenpox), shingles, infection, kidney disease, liver disease, lung disease. Any of these conditions could affect therapy with this medication.
- Carmustine may cause serious lung problems. These problems may be worsened by smoking. You should stop smoking.
- Check with your doctor or nurse if you need any vaccinations.
- It is important to drink at least 2 to 3 L (quarts) of fluid each day, unless your doctor or nurse tells you otherwise.
- Ask your doctor or nurse about mouth care and choice of toothbrush and dental floss. Check with your doctor or nurse before having any dental work done.
- There may be some temporary hair loss.
- Carmustine can be an irritant to the skin.
- 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 carmustine. Birth control pills alone may not be effective for contraception. It is important to discuss the most effective birth control with your doctor.
- Carmustine should not be used if you are pregnant or breast feeding.
- Carmustine may cause permanent changes in your menstrual cycle and 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:
Systemic Therapy Program, Cancer Care Nova Scotia
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(1-866-599-2236)

CNB 7645

MEDICATION INFO SHEET

CARMUSTINE (KAR- MUS-teen)

Other names for this medication:

BiCNU® (Brand Name)

Appearance:

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

Why this medication is used:

Carmustine is used in combination with other medications to treat brain tumours, myeloma, lymphoma and melanoma.

How do you take this medication:

Injection: Your chemotherapy nurse will inject the medication into your bloodstream over a period of an hour or two.