

### What is Bleomycin?

Bleomycin is an anti-cancer agent used in the treatment of some types of solid tumours and lymphoma.

### How does it work?

Bleomycin causes DNA damage by the formation of oxygen free radicals, which then causes single and double strand DNA breaks.

### How is it given?

Bleomycin is given as an intravenous (IV) injection or infusion.

### Special instructions:

- While you are receiving bleomycin and for a few months after treatment, you will need to have a number of lung function tests.
- After receiving bleomycin, your lungs can become more sensitive to agents such as oxygen and fluids, increasing your risk of getting lung damage. Consider a medical alert bracelet to indicate you have received bleomycin, so precautions can be taken to avoid exposure to these agents unnecessarily.
- Exposure to high oxygen levels, such as scuba diving or a general anaesthetic, can increase the risk of developing lung problems after treatment with bleomycin. Consider a medical alert bracelet and/or discussing such activities with your doctor before taking part.

### Possible Side Effects:

Listed below, but not limited to, are the more commonly experienced side effects that you may see. The side effects your child might experience may be temporary and some may be permanent.

	<b>Likely</b> Happens to 21-100 children out of every 100	<b>Less Likely</b> Happens to 5-20 children out of every 100	<b>Rare but serious</b> Happens to <5 children out of every 100
<b>Immediate</b> Within 1-2 days of receiving the medicine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High fever<sup>^</sup></li> <li>▪ Chills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rash (usually in pressure points)<sup>^</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Distinctive reaction similar to an allergic reaction (low blood pressure, confusion, fever, chills and wheezing)</li> <li>▪ Severe allergic reaction which can be life-threatening with rapid build-up of fluid under the skin, in the lining of the intestine and possibly in the throat or swelling of the tongue which could make it difficult to breathe</li> <li>▪ Nausea and/or vomiting</li> <li>▪ Pain at the tumour site</li> <li>▪ Pain at the injection site</li> <li>▪ A feeling of extreme tiredness, weakness or not feeling well</li> </ul>

# Bleomycin

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## Patient/Caregiver Information

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<b>Prompt</b> Within 2-3 weeks, prior to the next course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Raynaud's phenomenon (blanching (whiteness) of fingers or toes when they are exposed to cold or when you are under stress, this may make them feel cold or throb and ache)</li> <li>▪ Darkening of the skin (with itchy skin)</li> <li>▪ Inflammation and/or sores in the mouth (and/or throat and/or oesophagus) that may lead to swallowing difficulties and pain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Taste impairment</li> <li>▪ Loss of appetite</li> <li>▪ Weight loss</li> <li>▪ Inflammation of the lungs which could lead to chest pain and discomfort (depends on the dose)<sup>^</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hair loss</li> <li>▪ Changes to nails (shedding, thickening of the nail bed and darkening of the nail cuticle)</li> <li>▪ Fewer platelets may cause you to bruise and bleed more easily</li> </ul>
<b>Delayed</b> Anytime later during therapy, excluding the above conditions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inflammation of the lungs which could lead to chest pain and discomfort (depends on the dose)<sup>^</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shortness of breath</li> <li>▪ Damage and scarring of lung tissue which may make you short of breath (dose dependant. The risk is increased with radiotherapy, oxygen, and particular chemotherapy regimens, resulting rarely in death)<sup>^</sup></li> <li>▪ Scleroderma-like skin changes (hardening and tightening of the skin and connective tissue)</li> <li>▪ When used in combination with other chemotherapy agents: Coronary artery disease, heart attacks, blood clots and strokes</li> </ul>
<sup>^</sup> Toxicity may occur later			

This information sheet is a brief overview. Each individual can respond differently to the medication, it is vital that you communicate all signs and symptoms you observe to your doctor or nurse.

If you have any questions about the information provided please discuss them with your oncologist or haematologist.

Further information can be obtained from your doctor, nurse or pharmacist or at the following website:  
<http://medsafe.govt.nz/consumers/medicine/where.asp>