

What is Dactinomycin?

Dactinomycin is an anti-cancer agent used to treat different types of solid tumours.

How does it work?

Dactinomycin binds to the guanine portion of DNA and forms links with the cytosine portion of DNA. This blocks the replication of DNA and synthesis of RNA. Dactinomycin also causes enzyme-mediated breaks in DNA.

How is it given?

Dactinomycin is administered as an intravenous (IV) injection over 3 to 5 minutes.

Special instructions:

- This medicine may make your mouth sore and irritated. A doctor or nurse may give you oral mouth washes to keep your mouth clean after you receive dactinomycin.
- Certain side effects of therapy may be exacerbated when dactinomycin is given during radiation therapy. If you are receiving radiotherapy as part of your treatment, dactinomycin may be delayed or skipped during the duration of radiation.

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.

	Likely Happens to 21-100 children out of every 100	Less Likely Happens to 5-20 children out of every 100	Rare but serious Happens to <5 children out of every 100
Immediate Within 1-2 days of receiving the medicine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nausea ▪ Vomiting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Loss of appetite 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Severe allergic reaction which can be life threatening with shortness of breath, low blood pressure and a rapid heart rate ▪ Damage to the skin if the medication leaks from a vein
Prompt Within 2-3 weeks, prior to the next course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Temporary hair loss[^] ▪ Decreased blood cell components. A lower number of white blood cells may make it easier to get infections. Fewer red blood cells may make you feel tired and weak. Fewer platelets. This may cause you to bruise and bleed more easily. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Diarrhea and/or abdominal pain ▪ Mouth sores ▪ Inflammation to the skin around the mouth/lips ▪ Redness, burning or a darkening of skin at the sites which have received radiation in the past ▪ A feeling of extreme tiredness, weakness or not feeling well ▪ Elevation in the blood of certain enzymes found in the liver which could indicate liver irritation or damage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inflammation or damage to the liver which can be severe and life threatening and may lead to an enlarged liver and spleen, bleeding from the veins in the oesophagus, a yellow appearing skin, and fluid collection in the abdomen which makes it look larger ▪ Muscle aches and pains ▪ Sinusoidal obstruction syndrome (SOS) caused by damage to blood vessels in the liver[^] ▪ Acne or other types of skin bumps ▪ Low levels of calcium in the blood ▪ Fever ▪ Inflammation and/or ulceration (rarely) of the throat, oesophagus, intestine or rectum

Dactinomycin

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Patient/Caregiver Information

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Delayed Anytime later during therapy, excluding the above conditions			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A slowing of normal growth ▪ Inflammation of the lungs which could lead to chest pain and discomfort
Late Anytime later after completion of therapy			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A new cancer or leukemia resulting from this treatment
^ 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>