Filgrastim (G-CSF)

fil GRA stim

Patient/Caregiver Information

What is Filgrastim?

Filgrastim is granulocyte colony-stimulating factor (G-CSF). It is generally given after chemotherapy to reduce the duration of time when you have low neutrophils (a type of white cell in your blood that fights infections). By increasing the number of neutrophils it also reduces the associated risk of infections.

How does it work?

Filgrastim stimulates the production, maturation and activation of neutrophils.

How is it given?

Filgrastim is given as a subcutaneous (SC) injection or as an intravenous (IV) infusion.

Special instructions:

- Keep the filgrastim syringes stored in the fridge. Do not freeze the injections.
- Before giving a dose of filgrastim, take the syringe out of the fridge 1 hour prior to administration.
- Prefilled injections of 300micrograms and 480micrograms can be obtained on a prescription from your community pharmacy.
- For doses less than 300micrograms, prefilled syringes may be made for you by the hospital pharmacy for you to take home or you may be provided with vials.
- If you have been given vials of filgrastim, for each dose, withdraw the required volume into a syringe. Each vial should only be used for one dose of filgrastim and the remaining discarded. Do not shake the vial as bubbles will make it hard to withdraw the correct dose.
- If you are administering the filgrastim yourself, the nurses will provide you with all the necessary equipment and training.
- If you do not wish to administer the injection yourself, a community nurse may be arranged by your local hospital to come to your home daily to administer the filgrastim injection.
- A blood test will be required to check the level of neutrophils in your blood. If they are insufficient you will need to continue with the injections for longer. If they are at the required level, you will be informed to stop the injections.
- If you are from outside of Auckland, and you need to start or continue on filgrastim, your local hospital will provide you with further doses. This may be supplied as vials. Your local hospital nurse can arrange for a community nurse to administer the doses at home if possible.

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		▪ Irritation of skin at the injection site ▪ Headaches ▪ High than normal white cell count ▪	▪ Allergic reaction which is more common with IV administration compared to SC. The reaction may include hives, rash or facial swelling, wheezing, shortness of breath, low blood pressure or a rapid heart rate. ▪ Low grade fevers

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Prompt Within 2-3 weeks, prior to the next course	▪ Mild to moderate pain inside the bone	▪ Increased levels of liver enzymes and uric acid in the blood ▪ Fewer platelets in the blood that may cause you to bruise and bleed more easily.	▪ Enlargement of the spleen ▪ Rash or worsening of pre-existing skin rashes ▪ Hair loss ▪ Severe damage to the spleen which could lead to pain and loss of blood into the abdomen, and may be life threatening
Delayed Anytime later during therapy, excluding the above conditions			▪ Inflammation of blood vessels in the skin ▪ Acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) where there is a build-up of white blood cells and fluid in your lungs which makes you feel very short of breath ▪ Sickle cell crisis in patients diagnosed with sickle cell disease ▪ Sweet's syndrome – a rare skin condition marked by a fever and painful skin lesions that mainly appear on your arms, neck, face and back.
Late Anytime later after completion of therapy			▪ A blood disorder or leukaemia resulting from prolonged use of this treatment and in patients who have severe chronic neutropenia

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