

### What is Vinblastine?

Vinblastine is an anti-cancer agent used to treat brain tumours and some types of lymphomas.

### How does it work?

Vinblastine works on cells to prevent DNA synthesis. Vinblastine disrupts the formation of mitotic spindles, which stops the cell replicating during metaphase, a specific phase in the life of a cell cycle. Vinblastine also interferes with nucleic acid and protein synthesis by preventing the use of an amino acid called glutamic acid.

### How is it given?

Vinblastine is administered as an intravenous (IV) push or as a short infusion over 15 minutes.

### Special instructions:

- Vinblastine can cause or worsen constipation. Your doctor may prescribe a stool softener or laxative if you have constipation.
- You may be prescribed a medicine to help with numbness, tingling or pain that can occur with vinblastine treatment.
- Tell the nurse right away if you have pain or redness at the site where the injection is given.

### 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>▪ A sudden onset of shortness of breath which may be accompanied by wheezing and/or coughing and a feeling of tightness in the chest</li> <li>▪ The rapid death of large number of tumour cells can cause the uric acid in the blood to rise quickly. This could lead to kidney damage</li> <li>▪ Nausea and/or vomiting</li> <li>▪ Loss of appetite</li> <li>▪ Bone pain</li> <li>▪ Jaw pain</li> <li>▪ Inflammation and discomfort in the vein through which the vinblastine is given. If the vinblastine leaks out of the vein when being administered it will cause damage to nearby tissue</li> <li>▪ A heart attack or an abnormal heart rhythm</li> <li>▪ High blood pressure</li> <li>▪ 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<sup>^</sup></li> <li>▪ Headache</li> <li>▪ Seizures</li> <li>▪ Abnormal hormone function which may lower the levels of salt in the body</li> <li>▪ A feeling of tiredness or not well</li> <li>▪ Mouth sores</li> <li>▪ Depression</li> </ul>

# Vinblastine

vin BLAS teen

## 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>▪ Hair loss</li> <li>▪ A mild drop in white blood cells, red blood cells and platelets in your blood. A low number of white blood cells can make it easier to get infections. Fewer red blood cells may make you feel tired and weak. Fewer platelets may cause you to bruise and bleed more easily</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Constipation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reversible nerve problem that may affect the way you walk or the feelings in your fingers or toes (numbness or tingling) or may make you feel weak<sup>^</sup></li> <li>▪ Damage to the ear causing hearing loss which may be temporary or permanent, balance problem (dizziness) and ringing in the ears<sup>^</sup></li> <li>▪ Pain and bloating in your abdomen</li> <li>▪ Diarrhoea</li> <li>▪ Sore throat</li> <li>▪ Complete stoppage of your intestinal tract which can result in intestinal blockage</li> <li>▪ Bleeding from the gastrointestinal tract including from a stomach ulcer, the colon or rectum</li> <li>▪ Difficulty with urination or increase desire to urinate</li> <li>▪ Temporary inflammation of the liver leading to an elevation in the blood of certain enzymes found in the liver</li> <li>▪ A hoarse voice</li> <li>▪ Double vision</li> <li>▪ Drooping eyelids</li> <li>▪ Fluid build up in the lungs</li> </ul>
<b>Delayed</b> Anytime later during therapy, excluding the above conditions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Loss of deep tendon reflexes</li> <li>▪ Absence or decrease in the number of sperm and/or damage to the testis which may be temporary or permanent. This may decrease the ability to have children in the future.</li> <li>▪ Absence of menstrual cycles (periods) and damage to the ovaries that may decrease the ability to have children in the future</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>