



## PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Cladribine

This information from Lexicomp® explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

### **Brand Names: US**

Mavenclad (10 Tabs); Mavenclad (4 Tabs); Mavenclad (5 Tabs); Mavenclad (6 Tabs); Mavenclad (7 Tabs); Mavenclad (8 Tabs); Mavenclad (9 Tabs)

### **Brand Names: Canada**

Mavenclad

### **Warning**

#### **For all patients taking this drug:**

- This drug may lower the ability of the bone marrow to make blood cells that the body needs. If blood cell counts get very low, this can lead to bleeding problems, infections, or anemia. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.

#### **Cancer treatment:**

- This drug may cause kidney problems in some patients. Talk

with the doctor.

- The chance of kidney problems may be higher if you are taking any drugs that can affect kidney function. There are many drugs that can do this. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.
- Very bad nerve problems have happened with this drug. This includes not being able to move a part of the body (paralysis) that can be long-lasting. Call your doctor if you have any burning, numbness, tingling, or weakness in your arms or legs.

### **For patients taking this drug to treat MS (multiple sclerosis):**

- This drug may raise the risk of cancer. Do not take this drug if you have cancer. If you have ever had cancer, talk with your doctor.
- This drug may cause harm to the unborn baby if you take it while pregnant. Do not take this drug if you are pregnant, or if you are able to get pregnant but are not using birth control.
- If you are able to get pregnant, a pregnancy test will be done to show that you are NOT pregnant before starting this drug. Talk with your doctor.
- Use birth control to prevent pregnancy during treatment and for 6 months after the last dose in your treatment cycle. If you are using birth control pills or other hormone-based birth

control, use some other kind of birth control also, like a condom, during treatment and for 4 weeks after the last dose in your treatment cycle.

- If you get pregnant while taking this drug or within 6 months after your last dose, call your doctor right away.
- If you are a man able to father a child, do not take this drug if you are not using birth control. Protect your partner from pregnancy during treatment and for 6 months after the last dose of your treatment cycle.
- If you are a man and your sex partner gets pregnant while you take this drug or within 6 months after your last dose, call your doctor right away.

## **What is this drug used for?**

### **Tablets:**

- It is used to treat MS (multiple sclerosis).

### **Injection:**

- It is used to treat a type of leukemia.
- It may be given to you for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

## **What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?**

### **For all patients taking this drug:**

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any

other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.

- If you have any of these health problems: Kidney disease or liver disease.
- If you have any of these health problems: Hepatitis B, hepatitis C, HIV, or any other infection.
- If you have active TB (tuberculosis).
- If you take any drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) that must not be taken with this drug, like certain drugs that are used for hepatitis C, HIV, or infections. There are many drugs that must not be taken with this drug.
- If you are breast-feeding. Do not breast-feed while you take this drug. You may also need to avoid breast-feeding for some time after your last dose. Talk with your doctor to see if you need to avoid breast-feeding after your last dose.

**For patients taking this drug to treat MS (multiple sclerosis):**

- If you have a health problem called clinically isolated syndrome (CIS).

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs

(prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

## **What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?**

### **For all patients taking this drug:**

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- You may have more of a chance of getting an infection. Wash hands often. Stay away from people with infections, colds, or flu. Some infections have been very bad and even deadly.
- You may bleed more easily. Be careful and avoid injury. Use a soft toothbrush and an electric razor.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- If you are not up to date with all of your vaccines, talk with your doctor. You may need to have some vaccines before treatment with this drug.
- Talk with your doctor before getting any vaccines. Use of some vaccines with this drug may either raise the chance of an infection or make the vaccine not work as well.

- If you have taken this drug and you are getting a blood transfusion, talk with your doctor.

### **Cancer treatment:**

- Diarrhea, throwing up, upset stomach, and feeling less hungry are common with this drug. If these happen, talk with your doctor about ways to lower these side effects. Call your doctor right away if any of these effects bother you, do not get better, or get very bad.
- Patients with cancer who take this drug may be at a greater risk of getting a severe health problem called tumor lysis syndrome (TLS). This may lead to death. Call your doctor right away if you have a fast or abnormal heartbeat; any passing out; trouble passing urine; muscle weakness or cramps; upset stomach, throwing up, diarrhea, or not able to eat; or feel sluggish.
- Some products have benzyl alcohol. Do not give a product that has benzyl alcohol in it to a newborn or infant. Talk with the doctor to see if this product has benzyl alcohol in it.
- This drug may cause harm to an unborn baby. Women must use birth control while taking this drug. If you get pregnant, call your doctor right away.

**What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?**

**WARNING/CAUTION:** Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

**For all patients taking this drug:**

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Signs of infection like fever, chills, very bad sore throat, ear or sinus pain, cough, more sputum or change in color of sputum, pain with passing urine, mouth sores, or wound that will not heal.
- Signs of bleeding like throwing up or coughing up blood; vomit that looks like coffee grounds; blood in the urine; black, red, or tarry stools; bleeding from the gums; abnormal vaginal bleeding; bruises without a cause or that get bigger; or bleeding you cannot stop.
- Feeling very tired or weak.
- Shortness of breath, a big weight gain, or swelling in the arms or legs.

- Fast or abnormal heartbeat.

### **Cancer treatment:**

- Signs of kidney problems like unable to pass urine, change in how much urine is passed, blood in the urine, or a big weight gain.

### **For patients taking this drug to treat MS (multiple sclerosis):**

- Signs of liver problems like dark urine, feeling tired, not hungry, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.
- Signs of high blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Low mood (depression).
- A very bad brain problem called progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML) has happened with this drug. It may cause disability or can be deadly. Tell your doctor right away if you have signs like confusion, memory problems, low mood (depression), change in the way you act, change in strength on 1 side is greater than the other, trouble speaking or thinking, change in balance, or change in eyesight.

### **What are some other side effects of this drug?**

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no



side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

**Cancer treatment:**

- Feeling dizzy, tired, or weak.
- Headache.
- Muscle pain.
- Irritation where this drug is given.

**For patients taking this drug to treat MS (multiple sclerosis):**

- Signs of a common cold.
- Upset stomach.
- Headache.
- Back pain.
- Joint pain.
- Trouble sleeping.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at <https://www.fda.gov/medwatch>.

## **How is this drug best taken?**

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

### **Tablets:**

- Take with or without food.
- Swallow whole with a drink of water.
- Do not chew this drug.
- If you take other drugs by mouth, take them at least 3 hours before or 3 hours after this drug. If you are not able to do this, talk with your doctor.
- You will need to take special care when handling this drug. Check with the doctor or pharmacist to see how to handle this drug.
- Do not take this drug out of the blister pack until you are ready to take it. Take this drug right away after opening the blister pack. Do not store the removed drug for future use.
- Be sure your hands are dry before you touch this drug.
- Wash your hands after use.

### **Injection:**

- It is given as an infusion into a vein over a period of time.

## **What do I do if I miss a dose?**

### **Tablets:**

- Take a missed dose as soon as you think about it on the same day you missed the dose.
- If you do not remember to take your dose until the next day, take the missed dose. Then, take your next dose the day after. Your treatment week will be 1 day longer.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

### **Injection:**

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

## **How do I store and/or throw out this drug?**

### **Tablets:**

- Store in the original container at room temperature.
- Store in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.

### **Injection:**

- If you need to store this drug at home, talk with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about how to store it.

## **All products:**

- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

## **General drug facts**

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else's drugs.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

## **Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer**

This information should not be used to decide whether or not to take this medicine or any other medicine. Only the healthcare provider has the knowledge and training to decide which medicines are right for a specific patient. This information does not endorse any medicine as safe, effective, or approved for treating any patient or health condition. This is only a brief summary of general information about this medicine. It does NOT include all information about the possible uses, directions, warnings, precautions, interactions, adverse effects, or risks that may apply to this medicine. This information is not specific medical advice and does not replace information you receive from the healthcare provider. You must talk with the healthcare provider for complete information about the risks and benefits of using this medicine.

### **Last Reviewed Date**

2020-06-22

### **Copyright**

© 2021 UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates and/or licensors. All rights reserved.

If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

---

Cladribine - Last updated on March 1, 2021

All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center