Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Decitabine

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

Dacogen [DSC]

Brand Names: Canada

Demylocan

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat a health problem called myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS).
- 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?

- 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 are breast-feeding. Do not breast-feed while you take this drug and for 2 weeks after your last dose.

This drug may interact with other drugs or health problems.

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?

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Have your blood work and other lab tests checked as you have been told by your doctor.
- Low blood cell counts have happened with this drug. If blood cell counts get very low, this can lead to bleeding problems, infections, or anemia. Sometimes, these have been deadly. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- You may have more chance of getting an infection. Wash hands often. Stay away from people with infections, colds, or flu.
- You may bleed more easily. Be careful and avoid injury. Use a soft toothbrush and an electric razor.
- If you have upset stomach, throwing up, diarrhea, or decreased appetite, talk with your doctor. There may be ways to lower these side effects.
- If you have high blood sugar (diabetes), talk with your doctor. This drug may raise blood sugar.
- Check your blood sugar as you have been told by your doctor.
- Tell your doctor if you have signs of high blood sugar like confusion, feeling sleepy, unusual thirst or hunger, passing urine more often, flushing, fast breathing, or breath that smells like fruit.
- This drug has caused fertility problems in male animals. Fertility problems may affect being able to father a child. If this effect happens, it is not known if it will go back to normal.
- This drug may cause harm to an unborn baby. A pregnancy test will be done before you start this drug to show that you are NOT pregnant.

- If you or your sex partner may become pregnant, you must use birth control while taking this drug and for some time after the last dose. Ask your doctor how long to use birth control. If you or your sex partner gets 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:

- 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.
- Signs of fluid and electrolyte problems like mood changes, confusion, muscle pain or weakness, fast or abnormal heartbeat, severe dizziness or passing out, increased thirst, seizures, feeling very tired or weak, decreased appetite, unable to pass urine or change in the amount of urine produced, dry mouth, dry eyes, or severe upset stomach or throwing up.
- Signs of high or low blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Pale skin.
- Pinpoint red spots on the skin.

- Yellow skin or eyes.
- Swollen gland.
- Shortness of breath.
- Swelling.
- Blurred eyesight.
- Trouble swallowing.
- Chest pain or pressure or a fast heartbeat.
- Numbness and tingling.
- Depression.

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:

- Hair loss.
- Constipation, diarrhea, stomach pain, upset stomach, throwing up, or decreased appetite.
- Heartburn.
- Feeling dizzy, tired, or weak.
- Mouth irritation or mouth sores.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Headache.
- Itching.
- Back, bone, joint, or muscle pain.
- Pain in arms or legs.
- Muscle spasm.
- Anxiety.

- Irritation where this drug is given.
- Weight loss.
- Night sweats.

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.

- It is given as an infusion into a vein over a period of time.
- Other drugs may be given before this drug to help avoid side effects.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

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

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

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.
- 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.
- 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.
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- 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.

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

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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