Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Cladribine

This information from UpToDate® Lexidrug™ 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

APO-Cladribine; AURO-Cladribine; Mavenclad

Warning

All products:

- 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.

Injection (for cancer treatment):

- Nerve problems have happened with this drug. Severe nerve problems have happened with higher than normal doses but have rarely happened with normal doses. 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.
- Kidney problems have happened with higher than normal doses of this

drug, especially when taken with other drugs that can hurt the kidneys. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.

Tablets (for MS treatment):

- This drug may raise the risk of cancer. Do not take this drug to treat MS if you have cancer. If you have a risk for cancer or have ever had cancer, talk with your doctor. Follow what your doctor tells you to do about screening for cancer.
- 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.
- If you may become pregnant, you must use birth control while taking this drug and for 6 months after the last dose. Ask your doctor what kind of birth control to use. If you get pregnant while taking this drug or within 6 months after stopping it, call your doctor right away.
- If your sex partner may become pregnant, use birth control while taking this drug. You will also need to use birth control for 14 weeks after your last dose unless the doctor tells you otherwise. Be sure you know how long to use birth control and what kind of birth control to use. If your partner gets pregnant, call the 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?

All products:

- 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 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, infections, and others. There are many drugs that must not be taken with this drug.
- If you are able to get pregnant or father a child and are not using birth control.

Tablets (for MS treatment):

- If you are breast-feeding. Do not breast-feed while you take this drug and for at least 10 days after your last dose.
- If the patient is a child. Do not give this form of this drug to a child.

Injection (for cancer treatment):

- If you are breast-feeding. Do not breast-feed while you take this drug.

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?

All products:

- 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. Some infections have been severe or deadly. 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.
- Have your blood work and other lab tests checked as you have been told by your 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.

Tablets (for MS treatment):

- Your doctor may order an MRI scan before you start this drug.
- Hepatitis and TB have happened with this drug. Sometimes, these have been deadly. You will be tested for hepatitis and tuberculosis before the first and second treatment course.

Injection (for cancer treatment):

- Some products have benzyl alcohol. If possible, avoid products with benzyl alcohol in newborns or infants. Serious side effects can happen in these children with some doses of benzyl alcohol, including if given with other drugs that have benzyl alcohol. Talk with the doctor to see if this product has benzyl alcohol in it.
- This drug may cause harm to an unborn baby. If you may become pregnant, you 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:

All products:

- 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 shingles like pain, itching, or tingling; fever; muscle aches; or rash (with or without blisters).
- 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.
- A severe 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, 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.

Injection (for cancer treatment):

- 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.

Tablets (for MS treatment):

- Signs of high blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Depression.
- Liver problems have happened with this drug. Sometimes, these have been life-threatening. Call your doctor right away if you have signs of liver problems like dark urine, tiredness, decreased appetite, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.

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:

Injection (for cancer treatment):

- Feeling dizzy, tired, or weak.
- Headache.
- Muscle pain.
- Irritation where this drug is given.
- Diarrhea, throwing up, upset stomach, and decreased appetite 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 are severe.

Tablets (for MS treatment):

- 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 and then keep taking it as you were told. Your treatment cycle will be 1 day longer.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.
- If you are not sure what to do if you miss a dose, call your doctor.

Injection:

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

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

Tablets:

- Store at room temperature in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- Store in the original package until you are ready to use.

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 generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of this information is governed by the Terms of Use, available at https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/clinical-effectiveness-terms.

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If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

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

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