PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Vincristine

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

Vincasar PFS [DSC]

Warning

- This drug is given into a vein only. If given other ways, this drug can be deadly. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- This drug may cause tissue damage if the drug leaks from the vein. Tell your child's nurse if your child has any redness, burning, pain, swelling, blisters, skin sores, or leaking of fluid where the drug is going into your child's body.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat cancer.

What do I need to tell the doctor BEFORE my child takes this drug?

- If your child is allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell the doctor about the allergy and what signs your child had.
- If your child has Charcot-Marie-Tooth syndrome.

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

Tell the doctor and pharmacist about all of your child's drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe to give this drug with all of your child's other drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug your child takes without checking with the doctor.

What are some things I need to know or do while my child takes this drug?

- Tell all of your child's health care providers that your child is taking this drug. This includes your child's doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.

- Have your child's blood work and other lab tests checked as you have been told by the doctor.
- Breathing problems have sometimes happened with drugs like this one. Most of the time this happened in people also taking mitomycin. Breathing problems happened minutes to hours after the use of these drugs and up to 2 weeks after mitomycin. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has trouble breathing.
- If your child has an upset stomach or diarrhea, is throwing up, or decreased appetite, talk with the doctor. There may be ways to lower these side effects.
- To help with constipation, your child may need to drink more liquids, exercise, or include more fiber in the diet as your child's doctor has told you. Talk with your child's doctor about a stool softener or laxative.
- If the patient is a child, use this drug with care. The risk of some side effects may be higher in children.
- This drug may affect fertility. Fertility problems may lead to not being able to get pregnant or father a child. This may go back to normal but sometimes it may not. If you have questions, talk with your doctor.

If your child is or may be sexually active:

- This drug may cause harm to an unborn baby. Your child must use birth control while taking this drug. If your child gets pregnant, call your child's doctor right away.

If your child is breast-feeding a baby:

- Tell the doctor if your child is breast-feeding a baby. You will need to talk about any risks to the baby.

What are some side effects that I need to call my child's 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 child's doctor or get medical help right away if your child has 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 kidney problems like unable to pass urine, change in how much urine is passed, blood in the urine, or a big weight gain.

- Signs of high or low blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Signs of dehydration like dry skin, mouth, or eyes; thirst; fast heartbeat; dizziness; fast breathing; or confusion.
- Severe constipation or stomach pain. These may be signs of a severe bowel problem.
- Trouble passing urine, pain when passing urine, passing urine in a weak stream or drips, or passing urine more often.
- Nervous system problems have happened with this drug. This includes an abnormal burning, numbness, or tingling feeling; muscle weakness; trouble walking, change in balance, or not able to move part of the body (paralysis); loss of eyesight or other changes in eyesight; dizziness; not able to control eye movements; seizures; hearing loss (may be long-lasting); or throat, neck, or jaw pain. Call the doctor right away if any of these signs or symptoms happen.
- 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. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has signs of infection like fever, chills, or sore throat; any unexplained bruising or

bleeding; or if your child feels very tired or weak.

- Severe and sometimes deadly liver problems have happened with this drug. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has 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 child's doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother your child or do not go away:

- Hair loss.
- Constipation, diarrhea, upset stomach, throwing up, or decreased appetite.
- Stomach cramps.
- Weight loss.
- Headache.
- Feeling tired or weak.
- Back, bone, joint, or muscle pain.
- Mouth irritation or mouth sores.

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

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

How is this drug best given?

Give this drug as ordered by your child's doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

- It is given into a vein for a period of time.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

- Call your child's 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 child's doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about how to store it.

General drug facts

- If your child's symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your child's doctor.
- Do not share your child's drug with others and do not give anyone else's drug to your child.

- 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 child's 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.

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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

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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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