PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Epirubicin

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

Ellence

Brand Names: Canada

PMS-EpiRUBicin

Warning

- This drug may cause severe heart problems like heart failure. This can happen during treatment or years after your last dose. Sometimes, these problems will not go away or may be deadly. The chance may be higher if you have ever had heart problems or chest area radiation, or are using other drugs that may cause heart problems. The chance may be higher if you have ever had this drug or other drugs like this one. Ask your doctor

if you are not sure if any of your drugs may cause heart problems. The chance of heart problems depends on the dose of this drug and your health problem. In children, the chance of heart problems later in life is higher. Heart problems may happen even without any risk factors. Call your doctor right away if you have cough; chest pain; fast, slow, or abnormal heartbeat; swelling in the arms or legs, shortness of breath, or sudden weight gain; or feeling very tired or weak.

- This drug may lower the ability of your bone marrow to make blood cells that your body needs. This can lead to a blood transfusion. Severe and sometimes deadly bleeding problems or infections can also happen. Tell your doctor right away if you have signs of infection like fever, chills, or sore throat; any bruising or bleeding; or if you feel very tired or weak.
- Rarely, a bone marrow problem called myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS) has happened in patients treated with this drug. A type of leukemia has also rarely happened. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- This drug may cause tissue damage if the drug leaks from the vein. Tell your nurse if you have any

redness, burning, pain, swelling, blisters, skin sores, or leaking of fluid where the drug is going into your body.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat breast cancer.
- 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 have any of these health problems: Low white blood cell count, low platelet count, or low red blood cell count.
- If you have any of these health problems: A heartbeat that is not normal, heart disease, or liver disease.
- If you have had a recent heart attack.
- If you are taking cimetidine.
- If you have had daunorubicin, doxorubicin, epirubicin, idarubicin, or mitoxantrone before, talk with your doctor.

- If you are pregnant or may be pregnant. Do not take this drug if you are in the first trimester of pregnancy.
- If you are breast-feeding. Do not breast-feed while you take this drug and for 1 week after your last dose.

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?

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- 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.
- Dehydration and electrolyte problems can happen in

people who have diarrhea. Talk with the doctor about what to do to prevent dehydration and electrolyte problems.

- To help with mouth sores, use a soft toothbrush or cotton swabs and rinse the mouth. Do not use mouth rinses that have alcohol in them.
- Have your blood work and heart function checked as you have been told by your doctor.
- 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.
- Blood clots have happened with this drug. Sometimes, these blood clots have been deadly. Talk with the doctor.
- If you have had or will be having radiation treatment, talk with your doctor. Worse side effects from radiation treatment have happened with this drug.
- If you are 70 years or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.
- 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.

- Menstrual periods may stop during treatment with this drug. This may not go back to normal. People treated with this drug may go through menopause at a younger age than normal. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- 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 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 get pregnant, call your doctor right away.
- If your sex partner may get 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 your partner gets pregnant, call the doctor right away.
- If you are having sex and your partner is pregnant, use a condom during care and for 1 week after care ends.

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.
- Dizziness or passing out.

- 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.
- Call your doctor right away if you have signs of a blood clot like chest pain or pressure; coughing up blood; shortness of breath; swelling, warmth, numbness, change of color, or pain in a leg or arm; or trouble speaking or swallowing.

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:

- Color of urine is orange or red for 1 to 2 days after getting this drug.
- Hot flashes.
- Feeling tired or weak.
- Mouth irritation or mouth sores.

- Eye irritation.
- Hair loss is common with this drug. Most of the time this goes back to normal within 2 to 3 months after this drug is stopped.
- 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.

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.

- 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.

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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 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

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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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