



## DOXORUBICIN

OTHER NAMES: Adriamycin®

PURPOSE: Doxorubicin is a drug used in the treatment of cancer. It interferes with the growth and spread of tumor cells.

ADMINISTRATION: Doxorubicin is given by injection into a vein.

SIDE EFFECTS: Not all patients will experience all side effects.

SIDE EFFECT	MANAGEMENT
Nausea and vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You will be given medications to prevent or control nausea and vomiting.</li> <li>Drink plenty of fluids.</li> <li>Eat often in small amounts.</li> <li>If vomiting lasts more than 24 hours, contact your doctor or nurse.</li> </ul>
Lowered white blood cell counts. You may be more susceptible to infection, cold and flu and experience symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, chills and shakes, pain and burning when you pass urine.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wash hands often and avoid people with infections if possible.</li> <li><b>Contact your doctor or nurse immediately if your temperature is 38°C (100°F) or above or if you have any other signs of infection.</b></li> <li>Do not take acetaminophen (Tylenol® or others) for fever or other signs of infection unless approved by your doctor or nurse.</li> </ul>
Lowered platelet counts which may cause unusual bleeding or bruising.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brush teeth gently with a soft toothbrush</li> <li>Blow nose gently</li> <li>Prevent constipation</li> <li>Avoid cuts, burns and falls</li> <li>Report persistent bleeding to your doctor</li> <li>Do not take ASA (Aspirin® or others) or any nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (ie., naproxen, ibuprofen, indomethacin, etc.) if you have low platelets. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if starting new medications.</li> </ul>
Hair loss (Common)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hair will grow back after treatments are completed. The colour and texture may be different.</li> <li>Protect your head from sun or cold with a hat, scarf, or wig.</li> <li>Apply sunscreen before exposure to the sun.</li> </ul>
Mouth sores, including the lining of the mouth, throat, tongue, and gums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report sore mouth to your doctor or nurse.</li> <li>Use a soft toothbrush, floss, and brush gently.</li> <li>Rinse with club soda or other prescribed mouthwash. Do not use commercial mouthwashes.</li> </ul>

SIDE EFFECT	MANAGEMENT
Pain, redness, swelling, itching or irritation at the injection site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report this to your nurse immediately.</li> </ul>
Coloured urine - Your urine may be coloured red as a result of this treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The colour will disappear.</li> </ul>
Other symptoms you may experience include loss of appetite, diarrhea, tiredness or weakness, darkening of skin and fingernails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report these to your doctor.</li> </ul>

**OTHER IMPORTANT PRECAUTIONS:**

- There is a risk for some patients to develop heart problems with doxorubicin. Your doctor may order heart tests. Symptoms may include fast or uneven heartbeats, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing or swelling of the feet or lower legs. If you develop any of these symptoms, contact your doctor immediately.
- Other medications may interact with doxorubicin. Do not start taking new medications or herbal products without checking with your doctor or pharmacist. Tell your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist if you are taking any other prescription or non-prescription medicine, vitamin, or herbal product.
- Inform other doctors, dentists, or pharmacists that you are receiving doxorubicin.
- Inform your doctor, nurse, and pharmacist if you develop any new allergies or sensitivities.
- Discuss fertility and birth control with your doctor if necessary.
- It is very important to have blood counts and other lab tests as ordered. Your dose may be altered accordingly.
- If you experience any symptoms or problems not listed above, inform your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

**If you have any questions regarding this or any other drug therapy, please phone your cancer centre.**

Cross Cancer Institute – (780) 432-8771, Tom Baker Cancer Centre – (403) 521-3764  
 Central Alberta Cancer Centre – (403) 343-4802, Grande Prairie Cancer Centre – (780) 538-7288  
 Lethbridge Cancer Centre – (403) 329-0633, Medicine Hat Cancer Centre – (403) 529-8817

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