



FILGRASTIM

OTHER NAMES: Neupogen[®], G-CSF, granulocyte colony stimulating factor

PURPOSE: Filgrastim is a synthetic (man-made) version of a substance naturally produced by the body that stimulates the production and growth of certain white blood cells. White blood cells protect your body by fighting bacteria that may cause infection. Chemotherapy can sometimes lower the number of white blood cells, so filgrastim may be given after treatment to stimulate the production of more white blood cells.

Filgrastim may also be used to help your body make “stem cells” in your bone marrow. Stem cells help to produce cells that will mature into white blood cells (infection fighters), red blood cells (oxygen delivery and waste removal from organs and tissue), and platelets (blood clotting agents). Filgrastim helps to encourage the release of these stem cells into the blood from the bone marrow. These stem cells are then harvested (collected) from your blood for transplantation at a later date.

ADMINISTRATION: Filgrastim is a clear colorless liquid that is injected under the skin into the leg, arm or abdomen. If you are giving your own injection at home, you will be provided with booklets, a self injection kit, and instruction on self-injection. Refer to this material on how to prepare and administer the medication.

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

SIDE EFFECT	MANAGEMENT
<p>Mild to moderate bone pain may occur. It most often occurs in the breast bone, shoulder blades, bottom ribs, hips or lower back. The pain is usually mild to moderate and usually lasts for only a few days. The greatest discomfort may occur three to four days after you begin the injections (so try not to plan too much physical activity for that time period).</p> <p>General muscle pain may also occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your doctor or nurse will recommend a painkiller to use during this time. • If the pain continues or is severe, contact your doctor or nurse. • If you should experience pain in the chest area without having pain in the hips or other regions, contact your doctor immediately.
<p>Headaches (usually mild) may occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only use a painkiller recommended by your doctor or nurse.
<p>Redness or pain at the injection site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your nurse may ice the injection site before giving the injection to help minimize the redness and pain. • Apply warm compresses or soak the site in warm water for 15 to 20 minutes several times a day.

SIDE EFFECT	MANAGEMENT
Flu-like symptoms including fever, chills, cough, sore throat, muscle aches, fatigue, nausea, and loss of appetite. (These are uncommon).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact your doctor immediately if you have flu-like symptoms or elevated fever (over 38°C) • You may be instructed to take and record your temperature regularly. It is important NOT to take fever reducing medications (Tylenol[®] ASA, Advil[®]), unless you have checked with your physician. These medications can mask a fever which might indicate you have an infection requiring treatment. • Your doctor or nurse can suggest other medications for pain.
Allergic type reactions (rare). Symptoms may include shortness of breath, wheezing, faintness, skin rash or swelling in the face.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact your doctor immediately if you experience these signs.

OTHER IMPORTANT PRECAUTIONS:

- When your white blood cells are low, you are at greater risk of having an infection. Discuss with your doctor or nurse precautions to take to minimize the risk of infection.
- Contact your doctor immediately if you have any signs of infection, such as flu-like symptoms, fever, pain or burning when you pass urine or develop sores anywhere on your body.
- It is very important to have blood counts and other lab tests as ordered.
- Inform other doctors or pharmacists that you are receiving filgrastim therapy.
- If you experience any symptoms or problems not listed above inform your doctor or nurse.

- STORAGE:**
- Store filgrastim in the refrigerator. It should be removed from the refrigerator 20 to 30 minutes before your injection. Discard vial if left at room temperature for more than 24 hours.

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

OR
