

Lomustine (CCNU)

What is Lomustine and how does it work?

Lomustine is a cancer medicine known as an “alkylating agent”. Another name for this medicine is CCNU. It is made in a laboratory. This medicine fights cancer by stopping fast growing cancer cells from dividing and making new cells.

What should I tell my doctor before I start this treatment?

Talk to your doctor about the following:

- If you have ever had chemotherapy or anti-cancer treatment and the names of the medicines you were given.
- If you have ever had liver or kidney problems.
- If you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant. Your doctor will talk with you about what birth control to use when you take this medicine.
- If you are breastfeeding.
- If you have been told that you need to start a new medicine.
- The medicines/pills you take including:
 - ▶ Medicines ordered by any of your doctors
 - ▶ Herbs
 - ▶ Vitamins
 - ▶ Over-the-counter medicines

How does my doctor decide my treatment dose?

To determine your treatment dose, your doctor will review your height, weight, the medicines you take, how well your liver and kidneys work and any other health problems you have.

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

How will my treatment be given?

Lomustine comes in capsules. You may have to take more than 1 capsule for each dose. **Do not** take more capsules than ordered by your doctor.

Swallow the capsule(s) whole with a full glass of water at bedtime, unless told otherwise by a member of your health care team. **Do not take this medicine with food.** Take this medicine 1 hour before and 2 hours after you eat.

What are the side effects of this treatment?

Every person responds differently to treatment. Some of the more common side effects of this treatment are:

- Fatigue
- Dizziness
- Nausea and vomiting
- Low white blood cell count (may increase your risk for infection)
- Bleeding or bruising, including bloody or black stools or blood in your urine
- Changes with your lung function, including shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

When should I call my doctor?

You should call your doctor right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or higher

A fever can be life-threatening if not treated. Your doctor may ask you to go to the hospital.

- Shortness of breath or chest pain
- Severe fatigue or weakness
- Severe dizziness, lightheadedness or problems with balance
- Nausea and vomiting that is not relieved by anti-nausea medicine
- Sudden, severe stomach pain
- Abnormal bleeding, including black, tarry or bright red stool or nosebleeds that do not stop

Is there anything else I should know about this treatment?

- This medicine can cause changes in your lung function. Your doctor may order a pulmonary function test before you start treatment to check how well your lungs work.
- Chemotherapy may make it harder for your body to fight infections. Wash your hands often and stay away from people who are sick.
- Chemotherapy can change how your body reacts to vaccines. Talk to your doctor before you get any new vaccines.
- **Do not** use aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or naproxen (Aleve) for aches and pains unless told otherwise by your doctor.
- This treatment requires special precautions to prevent the medicine from coming into contact (through blood, urine, bowel movements, vomit, and vaginal or seminal fluids) with others. Your nurse or pharmacist will give you instructions to follow for 48 hours after your last treatment dose.
- Keep this medicine away from children and pets and **do not** share it with anyone.
- Store this medicine in a closed container in a dry place, such as a cabinet away from light, heat and moisture. **Do not** store it in your bathroom or refrigerator.
- Unless told otherwise, drink 8 to 10 cups of non-caffeinated fluid each day to stay hydrated.
- **Do not get pregnant or breastfeed** while you take this medicine. Tell your doctor right away if you become pregnant.

For more information about cancer, cancer treatment, side effects or how to care for yourself during treatment, refer to your **Chemotherapy and You** book, or ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

Go to this video link: <http://cancer.osu.edu/patientvideos> to learn more about your cancer diagnosis, treatment and care.