

Bortezomib (Velcade)

About This Medicine

Bortezomib is used to treat cancer. It is given in the vein (IV) or by an injection under the skin (subcutaneously).

Possible Side Effects

- Bone marrow suppression. This is a decrease in the number of white blood cells, red blood cells, and platelets. This may raise your risk of infection, make you tired and weak, and raise your risk of bleeding.
- Nausea and vomiting (throwing up)
- Constipation (not able to move bowels)
- Diarrhea (loose bowel movements)
- Fever
- Tiredness
- Decreased appetite (decreased hunger)
- Effects on the nerves are called peripheral neuropathy. You may feel numbness, tingling, or pain in your hands and feet. It may be hard for you to button your clothes, open jars, or walk as usual. The effect on the nerves may get worse with more doses of the medicine. These effects get better in some people after the medicine is stopped but it does not get better in all people.
- Rash

Note: Each of the side effects above was reported in 20% or greater of patients treated with bortezomib. All possible side effects are not included. Your side effects may be different depending on your cancer diagnosis, condition, or if you are receiving other medicines in combination. Please discuss any concerns or questions with your medical team.

Warnings and Precautions

- Severe peripheral neuropathy
- Low blood pressure
- Congestive heart failure – your heart is not pumping blood as well as it should be, and fluid can build up in your body.
- Changes in your lung function such as inflammation (swelling), scarring of the lungs and/or fluid buildup around your lungs, which can be life-threatening. You may have a cough and/or trouble breathing.

- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and constipation which sometimes requires treatment to help lessen these side effects. There is also an increased risk of developing a partial or complete blockage of your small and/or large intestine.
- Swelling in the brain that is usually reversible. Symptoms can be sudden (acute) and may include a headache, confusion, changes in eyesight, extreme tiredness/coma, and/or seizures. **If you start to have any of these symptoms let your doctor know right away.**
- Tumor lysis syndrome: This medicine may act on the cancer cells very quickly. This may affect how your kidneys work.
- Blood sugar levels may change
- Changes in your liver function, which can cause liver failure
- Damage to small blood vessels, which can cause bleeding and blood clots and can be life-threatening.
- A syndrome that affects your red blood cells, platelets, and blood vessels in your kidneys, which can cause kidney failure and be life-threatening.

Note: Some of the side effects above are very rare. If you have concerns and/or questions, please discuss them with your medical team.

Important Information

- Cytotoxic medicines leave the body through urine and stool, but they can also be present in other body fluids such as blood, vomit, semen, and vaginal fluids. Take precautions to prevent others from coming in contact with your medicine or your body fluids. Follow safety precautions during your treatment and for as long as directed by your health care provider after your treatment. If you take a cytotoxic pill each day, follow these precautions every day.
- This medicine may impair your ability to drive or use machinery. Use caution and talk to your doctor and/or nurse about any precautions you may need to take.

Treating Side Effects

- Manage tiredness by pacing your activities for the day.
- Be sure to include periods of rest between energy-draining activities.
- To decrease the risk of infection, wash your hands regularly.
- Avoid close contact with people who have a cold, the flu, or other infections.
- Take your temperature as your doctor or nurse tells you, and whenever you feel like you may have a fever.
- To help decrease the risk of bleeding, use a soft toothbrush. Check with your nurse before using dental floss.
- Be very careful when using knives or tools.
- Use an electric shaver instead of a razor.
- Drink enough fluids to keep your urine pale yellow.
- If you throw up or have diarrhea, you should drink more fluids so that you do not become dehydrated (lack of water in the body from losing too much fluid).



- To help with nausea and vomiting, eat small, frequent meals instead of three large meals a day. Choose foods and drinks that are at room temperature. Ask your nurse or doctor about other helpful tips and medicine that is available to help stop or lessen these symptoms.
- If you have diarrhea, eat low-fiber foods that are high in protein and calories and avoid foods that can irritate your digestive tracts or lead to cramping.
- If you are not able to move your bowels, check with your doctor or nurse before you use enemas, laxatives, or suppositories.
- Ask your doctor or nurse about medicines that are available to help stop or lessen constipation and/or diarrhea.
- To help with decreased appetite, eat foods high in calories and protein, such as meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, tofu, eggs, nuts, milk, yogurt, cheese, ice cream, pudding, and nutritional supplements.
- Consider using sauces and spices to increase taste. Daily exercise, with your doctor's approval, may increase your appetite.
- If you have numbness and tingling in your hands and feet, be careful when cooking, walking, and handling sharp objects and hot liquids.
- If you get a rash do not put anything on it unless your doctor or nurse says you may. Keep the area around the rash clean and dry. Ask your doctor for medicine if your rash bothers you.
- If you have diabetes, keep good control of your blood sugar level. Tell your nurse or your doctor if your glucose levels are higher or lower than normal.
- While you are getting this medicine, please tell your nurse right away if you get a rash, swelling or bruising or your skin gets red, warm, itchy or painful at the site of your infusion or injection.

Food and Medicine Interactions

- This medicine may interact with grapefruit and grapefruit juice. Talk to your doctor as this could make side effects worse.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist about all other prescription medicines and over-the-counter medicines and dietary supplements (vitamins, minerals, herbs, and others) you are taking before starting this medicine as there are known medicine interactions with bortezomib. Also, check with your doctor or pharmacist before starting any new prescription or over-the-counter medicines, or dietary supplements to make sure that there are no interactions.
- This medicine may interact with St. John's Wort and may lower the levels of the medicine in your body, which can make it less effective.

When to Call the Doctor

Call your doctor or nurse if you have any of these symptoms and/or any new or unusual symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4° F (38° C) or higher
- Chills
- Tiredness that interferes with your daily activities
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or not normal way (palpitations)
- Dry cough



- Wheezing and/or trouble breathing
- Pain in your chest
- Easy bleeding or bruising
- Confusion
- Extreme tiredness and/or coma
- Headache that does not go away
- Blurry vision or changes in your eyesight
- Symptoms of a seizure such as confusion, blacking out, passing out, loss of hearing or vision, blurred vision, unusual smells or tastes (such as burning rubber), trouble talking, tremors or shaking in parts or all of the body, repeated body movements, tense muscles that do not relax, and loss of control of urine and bowels. **If you or your family member suspects you are having a seizure, call 911 right away.**
- Nausea that stops you from eating or drinking and/or is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Throwing up more than 3 times a day
- Lasting loss of appetite or rapid weight loss of five pounds in a week
- No bowel movement in 3 days or when you feel uncomfortable
- Pain in your abdomen that does not go away
- Diarrhea, 4 times in one day or diarrhea with lack of strength or a feeling of being dizzy
- Unable to pass gas
- Numbness, tingling, or pain in your hands and feet
- Swelling of your legs, ankles, feet, or any other part of the body
- Weight gain of 5 pounds in one week (fluid retention)
- Decreased or very dark urine
- New rash and/or itching
- Rash that is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Yellowing of the eyes or skin
- Abnormal blood sugar
- Signs of high blood sugar: unusual thirst, passing urine often, headache, sweating, shakiness, irritability
- Signs of low blood sugar: feeling sleepy, increased hunger, sweating, shakiness, irritability
- Signs of tumor lysis: confusion or agitation, decreased urine, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, muscle cramping, numbness and/or tingling, seizures
- Signs of possible liver problems: dark urine, pale bowel movements, pain in your abdomen, feeling very tired and weak, unusual itching, or yellowing of the eyes or skin
- If you think you are pregnant or may have impregnated your partner

Reproduction Warnings

- **Pregnancy warning:** This medicine can have harmful effects on the unborn baby. Women of childbearing potential should use effective methods of birth control during your cancer treatment and for 7 months after stopping treatment. Men with female partners of childbearing potential should use effective methods of birth control during your cancer treatment and for 4 months after stopping treatment. Let your doctor know right away if you think you may be pregnant or may have impregnated your partner.



- **Breastfeeding warning:** Women should not breastfeed during treatment and for 2 months after stopping treatment because this medicine could enter the breast milk and cause harm to a breastfeeding baby.
- **Fertility warning:** In men and women both, this medicine may affect your ability to have children in the future. Talk with your doctor or nurse if you plan to have children. Ask for information on sperm or egg banking.

Revised February 2024

