

Docetaxel (Taxotere)

About This Medicine

Docetaxel is used to treat cancer. It is given in the vein (IV).

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.
- Neutropenic fever. A type of fever that can develop when you have a very low number of white blood cells which can be life-threatening.
- Soreness of the mouth and throat. You may have red areas, white patches, or sores that hurt.
- Nausea and vomiting (throwing up)
- Constipation (not able to move bowels)
- Diarrhea (loose bowel movements)
- Infections
- Fluid retention - swelling of the hands, feet, or any other part of the body. Fluid may build up around your lungs and/or heart.
- Changes in the way food and drinks taste
- 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.
- Decreased appetite (decreased hunger)
- Weakness
- Pain
- Muscle pain/aching
- Trouble breathing
- Changes in your nail color, you may have nail loss and/or brittle nail
- Hair loss. Hair loss is often temporary, although there have been cases of permanent hair loss reported. Hair loss may happen suddenly or gradually. If you lose hair, you may lose it from your head, face, armpits, pubic area, chest, and/or legs. You may also notice your hair getting thin.
- Allergic skin reaction. You may develop blisters on your skin that are filled with fluid or a severe red rash all over your body that may be painful.
- Allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis, are rare but may happen in some patients. Signs of allergic reaction to this medicine may be swelling of the face, feeling like your tongue or throat are

swelling, trouble breathing, rash, itching, fever, chills, feeling dizzy, and/or feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or not normal way. **If this happens, do not take another dose of this medicine. You should get urgent medical treatment.**

Note: 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 bone marrow suppression, including febrile neutropenia, which can be life-threatening
- Severe allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis, which can be life-threatening
- Colitis - inflammation (swelling) in the colon which can be life-threatening - symptoms are diarrhea, stomach cramping, and sometimes blood in the bowel movements
- Severe skin reactions, including redness, swelling, or peeling of skin
- Severe swelling in the eye or other changes in eyesight
- Severe fluid retention
- If you have a history of abnormal liver function, receive high doses of docetaxel, or have a history of lung cancer and have received treatment with a platinum (type of chemotherapy medicine), you have an increased risk of death.
- Severe weakness
- This medicine may raise your risk of getting a second cancer such as leukemia, lymphoma, myelodysplastic syndrome, and kidney cancer.
- Severe peripheral neuropathy
- This medicine contains alcohol and may affect your central nervous system. The central nervous system is made up of your brain and spinal cord. You may feel dizzy and very sleepy.
- Tumor lysis syndrome: This medicine may act on the cancer cells very quickly. This may affect how your kidneys work.

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 tell your nurse or doctor if you feel dizzy, very sleepy, and/or experience low blood pressure.



Treating Side Effects

- Manage tiredness by pacing your activities for the day.
- Be sure to include periods of rest between energy-draining activities.
- Get regular exercise, with your doctor's approval. If you feel too tired to exercise vigorously, try taking a short walk.
- 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.
- Mouth care is very important and will help food taste better and improve your appetite. Your mouth care should consist of routine, gentle cleaning of your teeth or dentures and rinsing your mouth with a mixture of 1/2 teaspoon of salt in 8 ounces of water or 1/2 teaspoon of baking soda in 8 ounces of water. This should be done at least after each meal and at bedtime.
- If you have mouth sores, avoid mouthwash that has alcohol. Also avoid alcohol and smoking because they can bother your mouth and throat.
- Taking good care of your mouth may help food taste better and improve your appetite
- 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).
- 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 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.
- 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.
- Keeping your pain under control is important to your well-being. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you are experiencing pain.
- 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.
- Keeping your nails moisturized may help with brittleness.
- To help with hair loss, wash with a mild shampoo and avoid washing your hair every day. Avoid coloring your hair.
- Avoid rubbing your scalp, pat your hair or scalp dry.



- Limit your use of hair spray, electric curlers, blow dryers, and curling irons.
- If you are interested in getting a wig, talk to your nurse and they can help you get in touch with programs in your local area.
- If you have numbness and tingling in your hands and feet, be careful when cooking, walking, and handling sharp objects and hot liquids.

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 docetaxel. 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
- Blurred vision or other changes in eyesight, excessive tearing
- Symptoms of being drunk, confusion, or being very sleepy
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Tiredness and/or weakness that interferes with your daily activities
- Easy bruising or bleeding
- Wheezing and/or trouble breathing
- Chest pain
- Pain in your mouth or throat that makes it hard to eat or drink
- 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
- Diarrhea, 4 times in one day or diarrhea with lack of strength or a feeling of being dizzy
- No bowel movement in 3 days or when you feel uncomfortable
- Pain in your abdomen that does not go away
- Blood in your stool (bright red, or black/tarry)
- Swelling of the hands, feet, or any other part of the body
- Weight gain of 5 pounds in one week (fluid retention)
- New rash and/or itching
- Rash that is not relieved by prescribed medicines



- Signs of inflammation/infection (redness, swelling, pain) of the tissue around your nails.
- Signs of infection: fever or chills, cough, trouble breathing, severe pain in your abdomen, difficulty urinating, burning or pain when you pass urine, redness and/or swelling of the skin
- Signs of allergic reaction: swelling of the face, feeling like your tongue or throat are swelling, trouble breathing, rash, itching, fever, chills, feeling dizzy, and/or feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or not normal way. **If this happens, call 911 for emergency care.**
- Flu-like symptoms: fever, headache, muscle and joint aches, and fatigue (low energy, feeling weak)
- 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
- Numbness, tingling, or pain in your hands and feet
- Signs of tumor lysis: confusion or agitation, decreased urine, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, muscle cramping, numbness and/or tingling, seizures.
- General pain that does not go away or is not relieved by prescribed medicine
- If you think you may be pregnant or have impregnated your partner

Reproduction Warnings

- **Pregnancy warning:** This medicine can have harmful effects on the unborn baby. Women of child-bearing potential should use effective methods of birth control during your cancer treatment and for 2 months after stopping treatment. Men with female partners of childbearing potential should use effective methods of birth control (or condoms) 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 1 week after stopping treatment because this medicine could enter the breast milk and cause harm to a breastfeeding baby.
- **Fertility warning:** In men, 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 banking.

Revised May 2024

