



Procarbazine

Please read this in conjunction with any patient information leaflet provided by the manufacturer. However, please note that this information sheet explains about the use of procarbazine in children and young people so may differ from the manufacturer's information.

This information sheet explains what procarbazine is, how it is given and some of the possible side effects. Each person reacts differently to medicines, so your child will not necessarily suffer from every side effect mentioned. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

What is procarbazine?

Procarbazine is a chemotherapy medicine used to treat cancer, such as Hodgkin's Disease, a cancer of the lymph glands. It is occasionally used to treat liver and brain tumours.

How is procarbazine given?

Procarbazine is given by mouth in the form of capsules, usually in two to three doses a day.

What are the side effects?

Nausea and vomiting

Anti-sickness medicines can be given to reduce or prevent these symptoms. Please tell your doctor or nurse if your child's sickness is not controlled or persists.

Loss of appetite

It is possible that your child may 'go off' food and their appetite may reduce while having treatment. The dietitians may be able to suggest ways of making food more attractive to your child.

Bone marrow suppression

There will be a temporary reduction in how well your child's bone marrow works. This means your child may become anaemic, bruise or bleed more easily than usual, and have a higher risk of infection. Your child's blood counts will be checked regularly to see how the bone marrow is working. Please tell your doctor if your child seems unusually tired, has bruising or bleeding, or any signs of infection, especially a high temperature.

Fertility

Depending on the combination of medicines and the dose that your child is given, his or her fertility may be affected. If you feel you would like more information, please discuss this with your doctor.





Skin rash

Please tell your doctor or nurse if your child develops a skin rash. They will advise you on the appropriate treatment to use.

Flu-like symptoms

Your child may have headaches and tiredness, aching joints and muscles, a high temperature and chills. Paracetamol may be given to relieve these symptoms only if your child is not neutropenic.

Interactions with other medicines

Some medicines can react with procarbazine, altering how well it works. Always check with your doctor or pharmacist before giving your child any other medicine, including medicines on prescription from your family doctor (GP), medicines bought from a pharmacy (chemist) or any herbal or complementary medicines. Cough and cold medicines (other than paracetamol) should be particularly avoided.

Certain foods and drinks may cause an unpleasant reaction if your child eats them while being treated with procarbazine or for two weeks after the course has finished. The main foods and drinks that could cause a reaction include: mature cheeses, yeast or meat extracts, like Marmite®, Oxo® and Bovril®, salami, pepperoni sausage, broad bean pods, overripe fruits, other foods which are not fresh, particularly if they have been fermented, pickled, smoked, hung or matured. These reactions are extremely rare so if your child want to eat something on the list, try a small amount first until it is clear that it does not make your child feel ill.

Important information

- Keep all medicines in a safe place where children cannot reach them.
- Procarbazine should be kept in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight or heat.
- You should handle these medicines with care, avoiding touching them where possible. If you are pregnant or think you could be pregnant, please discuss handling instructions with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. Please see our *Special handling requirements* information sheet for further details.
- If your child vomits after taking the dose, inform the doctor or nurse. Do not give them another dose.
- If you forget to give your child their dose, do not give them a double dose. Inform your doctor or nurse and keep to your child's regular dose schedule.
- If your child cannot swallow capsules, you can make them into a mixture as follows:
 - You will need a pair of rubber gloves, a mask, a glass and an oral syringe. 'Duck' masks are available from Day Care – please use a new mask for each dose.
 - Put on your gloves and mask
 - Put a little water into the glass
 - Empty the contents of the required number of capsules onto the water.
 - Draw up the dose using the oral syringe and give to your child
 - Wash the syringe, gloves and glass in warm, soapy water and do not use for any other purpose.



- If you accidentally spill the capsules or mixture, wash the area thoroughly with plenty of water.
- If the mixture accidentally gets into your eyes, wash with plenty of running water for 5 to 10 minutes.
- Empty capsules, used paper towels, masks, vomit and dirty disposable nappies should be placed inside two rubbish bags and disposed of along with your normal rubbish.
- If your doctor decides to stop treatment with procarbazine or the medicine passes its expiry date, return any remaining medicine to the pharmacist. Do not flush it down the toilet or throw it away.

Useful numbers

GOSH switchboard	020 7405 9200
Pharmacy department	020 7829 8680
Pharmacy medicines information	020 7829 8608

Notes

Compiled by the Pharmacy department in collaboration with the Child and Family Information Group

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