



# NEBRASKA CANCER SPECIALISTS

*the Physicians of Oncology Hematology West*

## **Arsenic Trioxide**

**Trade names:** Trisenox<sup>®</sup>

**Drug type:** Arsenic Trioxide is an anti-cancer/cytotoxic chemotherapy drug.

### **How this drug is given:**

- Arsenic trioxide is administered into a vein (intravenous, IV).

### **Side effects:**

Important things to remember about the side effects of arsenic trioxide:

- You will not get all of the side effects mentioned below.
- Side effects are almost always reversible and will usually go away after therapy is complete.
- Side effects are quite manageable. There are many options to minimize or prevent them

### **The following side effects are common for patients receiving arsenic trioxide:**

- Nausea and vomiting
- Cough
- Fatigue
- Fever
- Headache
- Rapid heartbeat
- Abdominal pain
- Diarrhea
- Shortness of breath
- Blood test abnormalities (low potassium and magnesium) (elevated blood glucose level)
- Swelling of the face, hands, feet or legs
- Sore throat
- Difficulty sleeping
- Rash
- Heart rhythm changes
- Joint pain
- Itching
- Numbness or tingling of hands or feet
- Chills
- Anxiety

## **These are less common side effects for patients receiving arsenic trioxide:**

- Constipation
- Chest pain
- Low blood pressure
- Poor appetite
- Nosebleeds or bruising
- Depression
- Muscle, bone or generalized pains
- Dizziness
- Post nasal drip or sinusitis
- Altered blood liver enzyme levels
- Low blood counts. Your white and red blood cells and platelets may temporarily decrease. This can put you at increased risk for infection, anemia and/or bleeding.
- High potassium levels in the blood
- Weight gain
- Vaginal bleeding
- Dry skin

## **When to contact your doctor or health care provider:**

Contact your health care provider ***immediately***, day or night, if you should experience any of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 101° F or higher, chills (possible signs of infection)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Sudden weight gain

The following symptoms require medical attention, but are not an emergency. Contact your health care provider ***within 24 hours*** of noticing any of the following:

- Nausea (interferes with ability to eat and unrelieved with prescribed medication)
- Vomiting (vomiting more than 4-5 times in a 24 hour period)
- Rapid heart beat (recurrent or persistent - does not go away)
- Diarrhea (4-6 episodes in a 24-hour period)
- Unusual bleeding or bruising
- Black or tarry stool or blood in your stools
- Extreme fatigue (unable to carry on self-care activities)

**Always inform your health care provider if you experience any unusual symptoms.**