



# NEBRASKA CANCER SPECIALISTS

*the Physicians of Oncology Hematology West*

## Dactinomycin

**Trade name:** Cosmegen<sup>®</sup>

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

### How this drug is given:

- Dactinomycin is given through a vein (intravenous, IV).
- Dactinomycin is classified as a vesicant medication, meaning it can cause damage to tissue that comes in direct contact with the drug. Notify your nurse immediately if you have pain or swelling at the infusion site.

### Side effects:

Important things to remember about the side effects of dactinomycin:

- Most people do not experience all of the side effects listed.
- Side effects are almost always reversible and will usually go away after treatment is complete.
- There are many options to help minimize or prevent side effects.

### The following side effects are common for patients receiving dactinomycin:

- Low blood counts; white and red blood cells and platelets may temporarily decrease
- Hair loss (occurs within weeks)
- Nausea and vomiting (occurs within hours to days)
- Mouth sores (occurs within weeks)
- Diarrhea (occurs within days to weeks)
- Skin problems (acne, redness, peeling of skin)
- Sensitivity to sunlight

### These are less common side effects for patients receiving dactinomycin:

- Loss of appetite
- Fatigue
- Darkening of the skin where previous radiation treatment has been given
- Liver problems (elevated liver enzymes)
- Loss of fertility; your ability to conceive or father a child may be affected by dactinomycin. Discuss this issue with your health care provider.

### Delayed effects:

There is a **slight risk** of developing a secondary cancer months to years after taking dactinomycin. Talk to your doctor about this risk.

## **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)

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)
- 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)
- Mouth sores (painful redness, swelling or ulcers)
- Severe skin rash with itching or peeling of the skin
- Swelling of abdomen
- Yellowing of eyes or skin
- Change in the color of stool (pale in color) or urine (tea colored)
- Pain, redness or swelling at IV site

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