



NEBRASKA CANCER SPECIALISTS

the Physicians of Oncology Hematology West

Doxil ®

Generic name: Doxorubicin liposomal

Drug type:

Doxil is an anti-cancer/cytotoxic chemotherapy drug. It is the drug doxorubicin encapsulated in a closed lipid sphere (liposome).

How Doxil is given:

- Doxil is given by injection through a vein (intravenously, by IV).
- Doxil is an irritant. An irritant is a chemical that can cause inflammation of the vein through which it is given. If Doxil escapes from the vein it can cause tissue damage. If you experience pain or notice redness or swelling at the IV site while you are receiving Doxil, alert your nurse immediately.

Doxil side effects:

Important things to remember about Doxil side effects:

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

Infusion-related Doxil side effects (symptoms which may occur during the actual treatment) include:

- Infusion-related reaction: symptoms include flushing, shortness of breath, facial swelling, headache, back pain, flushing, tightness in the chest and throat and/or low blood pressure. This happens in less than 10% of patients and the symptoms go away when the infusion is stopped and typically does not recur when the infusion is restarted at a slower rate. The first infusion is usually given at a slow rate to avoid the risk of these reactions.

The following side effects are common for patients receiving Doxil:

- Low blood counts. Your white and red blood cells may temporarily decrease. This can put you at increased risk for infection and/or anemia.
- Hand-foot syndrome (Palmar-plantar erythrodysesthesia or PPE) -skin rash, swelling, redness, pain and/or peeling of the skin on the palms of hands and soles of feet. Usually mild, starting 5-6 weeks after start of treatment. May require reductions in the dose of Doxil.
- Mouth sores

These are less common side effects for patients receiving Doxil:

- Nausea and vomiting
- Low blood counts
- Weakness
- Hair loss
- Constipation
- Poor appetite
- Diarrhea
- Discoloration of the urine (red/orange color) for about 48 hours after treatment
- Darkening of skin at the site of previous radiation therapy
- Darkening, discoloration of nail beds

A **serious but uncommon** side effect of Doxil can be interference with the pumping action of the heart.

Delayed effects of Doxil:

There is a slight risk of developing a blood cancer such as leukemia years after taking drugs similar to Doxil. Talk to your doctor about this risk in relation to Doxil.

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:

- Mouth sores (painful redness, swelling or ulcers)
- 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)
- Fast or irregular heart beats
- Unusual bleeding or bruising
- Black or tarry stools, or blood in your stools or urine
- Extreme fatigue (unable to carry on self-care activities)
- Constipation
- Swelling of the feet or ankles
- Tingling or burning, redness, swelling or peeling of skin, blisters or small sores on the palms of the hands or soles of feet

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