



NEBRASKA CANCER SPECIALISTS

the Physicians of Oncology Hematology West

Irinotecan

Trade names: Camptosar®

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

How this drug is given:

- Irinotecan is given through an infusion into a vein (intravenous, IV).
- Irinotecan is an irritant. An irritant is a chemical that can cause inflammation of the vein through which it is given. If the medication 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 irinotecan, alert your nurse immediately.

Side effects:

Important things to remember about the side effects of irinotecan:

- 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 irinotecan:

- Diarrhea; two types early and late forms.
 - Early diarrhea: Occurring within 24 hours of receiving treatment, accompanied by symptoms runny nose, increased salivation, watery eyes, sweating, flushing, abdominal cramping
 - Late diarrhea: Occurring greater than 24 hours of receiving treatment, usually peaks at about 11 days
- Nausea and vomiting
- Weakness
- Low white blood cell count
- Low red blood cell count
- Hair loss
- Poor appetite
- Fever
- Weight loss

These are less common side effects for patients receiving irinotecan:

- Constipation
- Shortness of breath
- Insomnia
- Cough
- Headache
- Dehydration
- Chills
- Skin rash
- Flatulence
- Flushing of face during infusion
- Mouth sores
- Heartburn
- Swelling of feet and ankles

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)
- Fainting, dizziness, lightheadedness, dark colored urine (symptoms of dehydration)

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:

- Diarrhea (4-6 episodes in a 24-hour period) despite use of anti-diarrhea medication and diet modifications.
- Nausea (interferes with ability to eat and unrelieved with prescribed medication).
- Vomiting (vomiting more than 4-5 times in a 24 hour period)
- Extreme fatigue (unable to carry on self-care activities)
- Mouth sores (painful redness, swelling or ulcers)

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