



# NEBRASKA CANCER SPECIALISTS

*the Physicians of Oncology Hematology West*

## **Rituxan ®**

**Generic Name:** Rituximab

### **Drug Type:**

Rituxan is a monoclonal antibody.

### **How Rituxan is given:**

- As an infusion into a vein (intravenous, IV), over about 6 hours. The time of the infusion may be shortened, depending on whether or not you have received Rituxan in the past, or how well you tolerate Rituxan.
- Medications will be given just before the infusion to reduce the occurrence of infusion-related symptoms.

### **Rituxan side effects:**

Important things to remember about Rituxan side effects:

- Most people do not experience all of the side effects listed.
- Side effects are often predictable in terms of their onset and duration.
- 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 Rituxan:**

- Fever and chills

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

- Weakness
- Nausea
- Headache
- Cough
- Runny nose, shortness of breath, sinusitis
- Throat irritation

A serious but rare Rituxan side effect is potential for a severe infusion reaction, typically with the first infusion (during infusion or within 30-120 minutes of infusion). You will be given medication prior to the infusion to decrease this reaction and monitored carefully during the infusion. If signs of reaction occur, the infusion is stopped. In most cases, the infusion can be restarted at a slower rate once symptoms subside.

Other rare but serious Rituxan side effects:

- Patients who have had heart pain or irregular heartbeats in the past may experience this again. If these occur tell your doctor or nurse, so that they can be treated.
- Rapid destruction of cancer cells can cause disturbances in metabolism leading to kidney problems.

**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)
- Shortness of breath, chest pain or discomfort; swelling of your lips or throat
- Confusion

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

- Develop a rash or sore joints
- Nausea (interferes with ability to eat and unrelieved with prescribed medications)
- Vomiting (vomiting more than 4-5 times in a 24-hour period)
- Other signs of infection, sore throat, cough, redness or inflammation, or pain on urination

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