



NEBRASKA CANCER SPECIALISTS

the Physicians of Oncology Hematology West

Taxol ®

Generic Name: Paclitaxel

How Taxol is given:

- Taxol is given through an infusion into a vein (intravenous, IV).
- Taxol 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 Taxol, alert your nurse immediately.
- Because severe allergic reactions have occurred in some people taking Taxol, you may be asked to take medications to help prevent a reaction.

Taxol side effects:

Important things to remember about Taxol side effects include:

- 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 Taxol:

- 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.
- Hair loss
- Pain in the joints and muscles. Usually temporary occurring 2 to 3 days after Taxol, and resolve within a few days.
- Peripheral neuropathy (numbness and tingling of the hands and feet)
- Nausea and vomiting (usually mild)
- Diarrhea
- Mouth sores
- Hypersensitivity reaction - fever, facial flushing, chills, shortness of breath, or hives when Taxol is being infused. The majority of these reactions occur within the first 10 minutes of an infusion. Notify your healthcare provider immediately (premedication regimen has significantly decreased the incidence of this reaction).

The following are less common side effects for patients receiving Taxol:

- Swelling of the feet or ankles (edema)
- Increases in blood tests measuring liver function- these return to normal once treatment is discontinued
- Low blood pressure (occurring during the first 3 hours of infusion)

- Darkening of the skin where previous radiation treatment has been given
- Nail changes (discoloration of nail beds - rare)

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, wheezing, difficulty breathing, closing up of the throat, swelling of facial features, hives (possible allergic reaction)

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:

- If you notice any redness or pain at the site of injection
- 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 stools, or blood in your stools or urine
- Extreme fatigue (unable to carry on self-care activities)
- Mouth sores (painful redness, swelling or ulcers)
- Yellowing of the skin or eyes
- Swelling of the feet or ankles/sudden weight gain
- Signs of infection such as redness or swelling, pain on swallowing, coughing up mucous, or painful urination

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