

Possible Side Effects (*continued*):

Diarrhea

What to do:

- Call your doctor if this happens more than 4 times in a day or for more than 1 or 2 days or if you feel lightheaded or dizzy.
- Drink extra fluids during the day.
- Your doctor may tell you to take a medicine called loperamide (Imodium). Follow the instructions on the box to take this medicine, **unless** told otherwise by your doctor.

This is not a complete list of all possible side effects. Tell your doctor if you have these or any other side effects that you think are caused by this medicine. Your James health care team will give you further help to manage side effects.

PATIENT EDUCATION

Taking Your Treatment Home

What you need to know about your Anti-Cancer Medicine

Melphalan (Alkeran)

This brochure has important information on how to use, handle, and store your medicine, what side effects to look for and how to manage them.

What it looks like: Round, white tablets

How to handle and store:

- **There are special safe handling instructions for this medicine.** Talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse about the precautions you need to follow when you take this medicine at home.
- **Store this medicine in the refrigerator** in an airtight container away from light, heat and moisture.
- Keep this medicine away from children and **do not** share it with anyone.

The James



How to take:

- Swallow the tablet whole with a full glass of water at the same time each day.
- Take 1 hour before or 2 hours after you eat. **Do not** take this medicine with food.
- **Do not** take more tablets than ordered by your doctor.
- **Do not** crush, break or chew the tablets.
- If you miss a dose, wait until it is time for your next dose. Skip the missed dose. **Do not double up on doses.**
- Use a calendar or diary to keep track of what days and what times you take this medicine.

Disposal:

- Talk with your doctor or pharmacist about how to get rid of prescription medicines safely.

Precautions:

- Tell your doctor if you have had a recent surgery, trauma or infection.
- Tell your doctor or pharmacist about any medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins and herbal products.
- **Do not get pregnant while on this medicine.** Talk with your doctor about what birth control to use.
- **It is important to follow these safety precautions while you take this medicine:**
 - Wash your hands well after each time you use the toilet or if you touch soiled linens.
 - Make sure all body fluids are cleaned up after each time you use the toilet.
 - Sit down to urinate.
 - Close the lid before you flush. Flush the toilet **at least 2 times** after each use. Do this for at least 48 hours after your last dose of medicine.

Possible Side Effects

You can find more information on side effects in the Patient Education booklet, *Treatment with Chemotherapy and Anti-Cancer Medicines*.

Nausea and Vomiting**What to do:**

- Call your doctor if you are unable to keep liquids down for more than 24 hours or if you feel lightheaded or dizzy.
- Take your anti-nausea medicine as ordered by your doctor or nurse practitioner.

Low White Blood Cells/Preventing Infection**What to do:**

- Call your doctor if your temperature is 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or higher.
- Wash your hands often.
- Wear a mask and stay away from people who are sick or do not feel well.
- Ask your doctor if you should get a flu or pneumococcal vaccine.

Bleeding/Bruising/Black Stools**What to do:**

- Call your doctor if you are bruising more easily, if your stools are black or tarry, or if you have other unusual bleeding such as bright red blood in your stools or nose bleeds that do not stop.
- Call your doctor for sudden, severe stomach pain.
- **Do not** use aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), or naproxen (Aleve) for regular aches and pains unless told to do so by your doctor.

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