



High Dose Cytarabine (Cytosar[®], ARA-C, Cytosine Arabinoside)

At the Clinical Center referred to as ARA-C (AR-aC).

How Given: Intravenously (by vein).

Drug Action: ARA-C blocks a protein that cancer cells need to copy and repair DNA. DNA is the genetic material in cells used to make new cells.

- Side Effects:**
1. Bone marrow effects can include a temporary decrease in white blood cells, platelets, and red blood cells. These effects usually occur within 5 to 7 days after treatment and can last up to 28 days.
 2. Nausea and vomiting can begin within 4 hours after treatment and last up to 24 hours.
 3. Lip, mouth, and throat sores can occur within 14 days after treatment.
 4. Eye changes can occur. Symptoms include burning, tearing, difficulty seeing, and reddened eyes that are sensitive to light. These symptoms usually occur within 3 to 7 days after treatment. Eye drops may be ordered to help decrease these symptoms.
 5. Dizziness, drowsiness, headache, hand tremors, and difficulty walking can occur.
 6. Skin changes, especially a painful redness of the palms of the hands and soles of the feet can occur. This redness can lead to blistering and peeling.
 7. Fever, muscle aches, bone pain, chest pain, rash, and fatigue can occur within 6 to 12 hours after treatment.

8. Diarrhea can occur.
9. Temporary hair thinning or hair loss can occur.

**Special
Instructions:**

1. Take anti-nausea medications on schedule as directed even if you are not having nausea.
2. Do not take aspirin or aspirin-containing products unless prescribed by your doctor.
3. Call your NIH doctor or nurse if you
 - have dizziness, drowsiness, headache, hand tremors, or difficulty walking
 - Are unable to drink for more than 1 day or unable to eat for more than 2 days after treatment
 - have a temperature of 101.0 °F (38.3 °C) at any time, or have a temperature of at least 100.4 °F (38.0 °C) that lasts 1 hour or occurs two times within a 24-hour period
 - have any unusual bleeding or bruising
 - have diarrhea for more than 2 days



This information is prepared specifically for patients participating in clinical research at the Warren Grant Magnuson Clinical Center at the National Institutes of Health and is not necessarily applicable to individuals who are patients elsewhere. If you have questions about the information presented here, talk to a member of your healthcare team.

Living with Cancer Chemotherapy Series
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Questions about the Clinical Center? OCCC@cc.nih.gov