



## Vincristine (Oncovin®)

*At the Clinical Center referred to as Vincristine (vin-KRIS-teen).*

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**How Given:** Intravenously (by vein)

**Drug Action:** Vincristine prevents cancer cells from dividing by affecting the tiny rods that form the cell's skeleton.

**Side Effects:**

1. The nervous system can be affected. Symptoms include
  - severe constipation
  - pain, numbness and tingling, or a “pins and needles” sensation that begins in the fingers and toes
  - difficulty walking
  - difficulty with fine movements, such as buttoning clothes
  - jaw pain

These symptoms can resolve over an extended period after the drug is stopped.

2. Generalized weakness can occur.

3. Temporary hair thinning or hair loss can occur.

**Special Instructions:**

1. Tell your nurse immediately if the drug stings or burns during treatment. If the drug leaks out of the vein, it can damage tissue. Prompt treatment is essential in order to minimize the damage.

2. Report “pins and needles” sensations to your NIH doctor. Be careful when handling sharp objects and avoid extremes of hot and cold.
3. Call your NIH doctor or nurse if you
  - have pain, discomfort, or redness at the injection site following treatment
  - have not had a bowel movement in 2 days. Discuss constipation prevention measures such as stool softeners or laxatives



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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National Institutes of Health, CC  
Nursing Department

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