

Pemetrexed

Care Team Contact Information: _____

Pharmacy Contact Information: _____

Diagnosis: _____

- This treatment is often used for non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) and a type of cancer that affects the lining of the lungs and chest wall, called malignant pleural mesothelioma (MPM).
- It may also be used for other reasons.

Goal of Treatment: _____

- Treatment may continue for a certain time period, until it no longer works, or until side effects are no longer controlled.

Treatment Regimen

Treatment Name	How the Treatment Works	How the Treatment is Given
Pemetrexed (peh-meh-TREK-sed): Alimta (uh-LIM-tuh), Pemfexy (pem-FEK-see)	Stops cancer cells from making the instructions they need to grow and multiply, causing the cells to die.	Infusion into a vein (intravenous (IV) infusion).

Treatment Administration and Schedule

- Treatment is typically repeated every 21 days. This length of time is called a “cycle”.
- Pemetrexed is often given in combination with other treatments. Talk with your care team about your exact treatment and schedule.

Treatment Name	Cycle 1							Next Cycle
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	...	Day 21	Day 1
Pemetrexed	✓							✓

Appointments

Appointments may include regular check-ups with your care team, treatment appointments, lab visits, and imaging tests. It's important to keep your appointments whenever you can. If you miss any appointments, call your care provider as soon as possible to reschedule your appointment.

Supportive Care to Prevent and Treat Side Effects

Description	Supportive Care Given at the Clinic or Hospital	Supportive Care Taken at Home
To help lower the risk of low blood cell counts and related side effects (vitamin B12 and folic acid)		
To help prevent or treat nausea and vomiting		
To help lower the risk of skin problems (corticosteroid)		
Other		

Common Side Effects

Side Effect	Important Information
Low White Blood Cell (WBC) Count (Neutropenia) and Increased Risk of Infection	Description: WBCs help protect your body from infections. A low WBC count increases your risk of getting infections. Recommendations: - Wash your hands often and bathe regularly. - Avoid crowded places and close contact with people who are sick. - Follow food safety and wound care advice from your care team. - Your care team may prescribe medicine to help your WBCs recover. Talk to your care team if you have: - Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher - Chills - New or worsening cough or sore throat - Painful urination or signs of a urinary infection - Feeling much more tired than usual - Red, swollen, warm, or painful areas on the skin (possible skin infection)
Low Platelet Count (Thrombocytopenia)	Description: Platelets help your blood clot and wounds heal. A low platelet count increases your risk of bruising and bleeding. Recommendations: - Blow your nose gently and avoid picking it. - Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush and keep good oral hygiene. - Use an electric razor for shaving and a nail file instead of nail clippers. - Avoid over-the-counter medicines that can increase bleeding risk (for example, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like ibuprofen). - Talk with your care team or dentist before medical or dental procedures — you may need to pause treatment. Talk to your care team if you have: - A nosebleed lasting more than 5 minutes despite pressure - A cut that continues to bleed - Heavy gum bleeding when brushing or flossing - Sudden or severe headache - Blood in your urine or stool - Blood in your spit after coughing
Low Red Blood Cell (RBC) Count and Hemoglobin (Hgb) (Anemia)	Description: RBCs and Hgb carry oxygen to your body's tissues and remove carbon dioxide. Low RBC or Hgb (anemia) can make you feel weak, very tired, or look pale. Recommendations: - Aim for 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night. - Do not drive, operate heavy machinery, or do other dangerous activities if you are very tired. - Balance activity and rest — stay as active as you can, but rest when needed. - Eat a balanced diet and follow any nutrition or supplement advice from your care team. Talk to your care team if you have: - Shortness of breath - Dizziness or fainting - Fast or irregular heartbeats - Sudden or severe headache

Fatigue	Description: Fatigue is a constant and sometimes strong feeling of tiredness. Recommendations: • Routine exercise can help reduce fatigue. Talk with your care team to find the right type and amount of activity for you. • Ask family and friends for help with daily tasks and for emotional support. • Try healthy ways to feel better, such as meditation, journaling, yoga, or guided imagery, to reduce anxiety and improve well-being. • Aim for 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night. Limit daytime naps to help you sleep better at night. • Do not drive, operate heavy machinery, or do other potentially dangerous activities if you are very tired. Talk to your care team if you have: • Tiredness that affects your daily life or prevents you from doing normal activities • Tiredness that does not get better with rest • Dizziness or weakness along with severe tiredness
Nausea and Vomiting	Description: Nausea is an uncomfortable feeling in your stomach or the need to throw up. You may or may not vomit. Recommendations: • Eat smaller, more frequent meals. • Avoid fatty, fried, spicy, or highly sweet foods. • Eat bland foods at room temperature and drink clear liquids. • If you vomit, start with small sips of water, broth, or other clear liquids. If these stay down, try soft foods (such as gelatin, plain cornstarch pudding, yogurt, strained soup, or strained cooked cereal) and gradually return to solid foods. • Your care team may prescribe medicine for these symptoms. Talk to your care team if you have: • Vomiting for more than 24 hours • Nonstop vomiting • Signs of dehydration (very thirsty, dry mouth, dizziness, or dark urine) • Blood or coffee-ground-like appearance in your vomit • Severe stomach pain that does not go away after vomiting

Select Rare Side Effects

Side Effect	Talk to Your Care Team if You Have Any of These Signs or Symptoms	
Kidney Problems	• Decrease in your amount of urine • Blood in your urine	• Swelling of your ankles • Loss of appetite

Lung Problems	• Cough • Shortness of breath	• Chest pain
Severe Skin Reactions	• A red, itchy, skin rash • Peeling of your skin or blisters	• Severe itching • Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher

Before starting treatment, ask your care team when to call 9-1-1 or seek emergency help.
If you experience any new, worsening, or uncontrolled side effects, contact your care team immediately.

Intimacy, Fertility, Pregnancy, and Breastfeeding

- Treatment may **change how you feel about intimacy and your body**. However, physical closeness—such as holding hands and hugging—remains safe. It is common to have questions about intimacy. If needed, talk to your care team for guidance.
- Treatment may affect your **ability to have children**. It may damage your reproductive organs or stop them from working. If you are worried about fertility, talk to your care team before starting treatment.
- Treatment may **harm an unborn baby**.
 - If you are able to become pregnant:
 - Take a pregnancy test before starting treatment.
 - Use an effective method of birth control during treatment and for 6 months after your last dose of pemetrexed.
 - If you think you might be pregnant or if you become pregnant, tell your care team right away.
 - If your partner is able to become pregnant, use an effective method of birth control—such as condoms—during treatment and for 3 months after your last dose of pemetrexed.
- **Do NOT breastfeed** during treatment and for 1 week after your last dose of pemetrexed.

Handling Body Fluids and Waste

Some drugs you receive may stay in your urine, stool, sweat, or vomit for many days after treatment. Because many cancer drugs are toxic, your body waste may also be dangerous to touch. To help protect yourself, your loved ones, and the environment, **follow these instructions** for at least **48 hours** after each dose of **pemetrexed**:

- People who are pregnant should avoid touching anything that may be soiled with body fluids from the patient.
- You can use your usual toilet. Always close the lid and flush to discard all waste. If you have a low-flow toilet, flush twice.
- If the toilet or seat is soiled with urine, stool, or vomit, clean the surface after each use before others use it.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after using the toilet.
- If you need a bedpan, inform your caregiver so they can wear gloves and assist with cleanup. Wash the bedpan with soap and water daily.
- If you cannot control your bladder or bowels, use a disposable pad with a plastic back, a diaper, or a sheet to absorb waste.
- Wash any skin exposed to body waste with soap and water.
- Wash soiled linens or clothing separately from other laundry. If you don't have a washer, place them in a plastic bag until they can be washed.
- Wash your hands with soap and water after touching soiled linens or clothing.

Additional Information

- **Tell your care team about all the medicines you take.**
This includes prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, and herbal products. Before starting any new medicine, supplement, or vaccine, ask your care team first.
 - Tell your care team if you have kidney problems and take a medicine that contains ibuprofen. Your care team may recommend to avoid taking ibuprofen for 2 days before, the day of, and 2 days after receiving treatment with pemetrexed.
- **Treatment can cause reactivation of skin reactions that can happen after radiation therapy (radiation recall).** Limit sunlight exposure during treatment. Use sunscreen and wear protective clothing when you will be exposed to sunlight during treatment.
- **This Patient Education Sheet may not describe all possible side effects.**
Call your care team for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

Notes

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Scan the QR code below to access this education sheet.



Important notice: The Association of Cancer Care Centers (ACCC), Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association (HOPA), Network for Collaborative Oncology Development & Advancement, Inc. (NCODA), and Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) have collaborated in gathering information for and developing this patient education guide. This guide represents a brief summary of the medication derived from information provided by the drug manufacturer and other resources.

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PES-643