

Carmustine (BiCNU[®])

Carmustine stops cell growth and is used for several different types of cancer. Because it crosses the blood-brain barrier, it is often used for brain tumors as well as many other types of cancer.

How Is It Given?

- clear liquid by IV (intravenous)

What Side Effects May Occur?

This is a partial list of the side effects you may have with this medicine. You may have some, all or none of those listed, or you may have other side effects not listed. Most side effects last only a short time.

Common:

- nausea (upset stomach) and vomiting (throwing up) (2 to 8 hours after treatment)
- loss of appetite
- lowered white blood cell and platelet counts (up to 4 to 6 weeks after treatment)
- pain or burning along the injection site as the medicine is infusing
- hair loss
- darkened skin along the vein used for injection
- facial or skin flushing

Less common:

- mouth sores
- dizziness
- mild liver damage (dark urine and yellowing of your skin, eyes or both)
- change in how well your kidneys work with higher doses
- visual changes are possible with high doses
- lung irritation with higher doses

Special Notes

- Do not smoke while taking this medicine.
- Some medicines may interact with carmustine. Please tell your doctor if you are taking any of the following:
 - digoxin (Lanoxin[®])
 - phenytoin (Dilantin[®])
 - mitomycin (Mutamycin[®]).
- You may have changes in your menstrual cycle or sperm count. Discuss birth control measures with your doctor. You should not get pregnant or father a child while taking this medicine.

When To Call Your Doctor

You should call your doctor if you have:

- shortness of breath, persistent dry cough
- vision changes
- pain, or swelling at the IV site
- nausea or vomiting you cannot control
- unusual bleeding or bruising
- unexplained fever, chills, or sore throat
- yellowing of your skin or eyes.

Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you want more complete medicine information or if you have questions.