

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

Cytarabine is an anti-cancer drug that stops cell growth and division. This medicine is used to treat many types of leukemia.

How Is It Given?

- by IV (intravenous)
- by injection (subcutaneous)
- by spinal injection (intrathecal)

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)
- lowered white blood cell, red blood cell and platelet count
- mouth sores (can occur 7 to 10 days after starting treatment)
- stomach cramps
- loss of appetite

Less common:

- skin rash or irritation (can occur 6 to 12 hours after starting treatment)
- eye irritation
- hair loss

- diarrhea
- headache
- lethargy, dizziness, slurred speech while the medicine is going through your bloodstream
- problems urinating

Special Notes

- If you receive cytarabine by injection, the injection sites may need to be rotated. This will help your skin from becoming irritated.
- Talk with your doctor or nurse if you have any problems with coordination, muscle control or walking.
- If you are taking high doses of this medicine, you may get eye drops to help protect your eyes.
- Some medicines interact with cytarabine. Please tell your doctor if you are taking any of the following:
 - digoxin (Lanoxin[®])
 - gentamycin (Garamycin[®]).
- 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:

- blurred vision, eye pain, or light sensitivity
- fever, chills or sore throat
- unusual bleeding or bruising
- nausea, vomiting or diarrhea you cannot control
- painful mouth sores
- trouble breathing
- severe rash or hives
- trouble standing or walking
- yellowing of your skin or eyes.

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