

Bleomycin (Blenoxane[®])

Bleomycin is an anti-cancer medicine that stops cell growth and division. It is used to treat many 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:

- fever or chills within 3 to 6 hours after a dose (usually lasts only 1 day)
- hair loss (may occur 2 to 3 weeks after starting treatment)
- mouth sores
- skin changes (darkening or peeling), itching or rash
- loss of appetite
- pain or irritation at the IV site

Less common:

- changes in fingernails or toenails
- mild nausea (upset stomach) or vomiting (throwing up)
- weight loss
- confusion
- allergic reaction (cough, shortness of breath or wheezing)

Special Notes

- Bleomycin can damage your lungs, especially after long-term use. Before your treatment you will have a pulmonary function test to check how well your lungs are working.
- You may also be given a test dose (a small amount of the medicine) before your treatment to see if you have any reaction to bleomycin.
- You may be more sensitive to sunlight while on this medicine. Avoid direct sun and wear a SPF-15 sunscreen and hat when outdoors.
- 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:

- wheezing, dry cough or shortness of breath
- unusual or painful skin changes or rash
- mouth sores.

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