

5-Fluorouracil (5-FU)

5-fluorouracil is an anti-cancer drug that stops cell growth and division. This medicine 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:

- loss of appetite
- lowered white blood cell and platelet counts (occurs 10 to 14 days after treatment)
- diarrhea (loose watery stools)
- mouth sores (may occur 5 to 7 days after treatment)
- reddening of the palms of your hands and soles of your feet
- sun sensitivity
- hair loss
- headache

Less common:

- skin rash
- nausea (upset stomach) and vomiting (throwing up)

- fingernail and toenail changes
- tearing of your eyes
- confusion
- feeling dizzy
- feeling drowsy
- feeling lightheaded

Special Notes

- Wear sunscreen and protective clothing while you are outside. Avoid being in the sun for too long.
- 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.
- Some medicines interact with fluorouracil. Tell your doctor if you are taking any of the following:
 - aspirin
 - warfarin (Coumadin[®])
 - phenytoin (Dilantin[®])
 - vitamins.
- Talk with your doctor before you get any immunizations, such as the flu shot, while you are taking fluorouracil.

When To Call Your Doctor

You should call your doctor if you have:

- fever, chills or sore throat
- unusual bleeding or bruising
- severe redness, pain or peeling affecting the palms of your hands or soles of your feet
- diarrhea
- vomiting you cannot control
- trouble breathing
- severe rash or hives
- yellowing of your skin or eyes
- stomach pain
- mouth or lip sores.

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