

Cetuximab (Erbitux[®])

Cetuximab is a medicine used to treat colon or rectal cancer. Cetuximab is known as a monoclonal antibody. The medicine targets tumor cells, causing the cells to stop growing and/or die. Cetuximab also decreases a chemical that the tumor cells make that allows them to build their own blood supply.

How Is It Given?

Cetuximab is given as a clear liquid infusion into a vein.

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:

- rash (mild to moderate)
- muscle weakness
- flu-like symptoms
- nausea and/or vomiting
- diarrhea or constipation
- headache
- abdominal pain

Less common:

- severe rash
- infusion reaction (trouble breathing, low blood pressure, itching)
- anemia (low red blood cells)
- swelling in the hands, feet or both

Special Notes

- If you develop a severe rash while receiving an infusion, your doctor will delay more treatments until the rash improves.
- Use an effective form of birth control while you are using cetuximab for at least 2 months after your last treatment.
- Tell your doctor if you have an allergy to mice, or medicines made of monoclonal antibodies (such as OKT3 or rituximab).
- Your doctor may prescribe a medicine like Benadryl[®] to take before an infusion. This medicine will help prevent a reaction.
- Your skin may be more sensitive to the sun while you take this medicine. Wear a good sunscreen when you are out in the sun.

When To Call Your Doctor

You should call your doctor if you have:

- develop a rash that is painful, warm to the touch, oozes fluid or all
- have a temperature of more than 100.5 F
- have frequent diarrhea and feel lightheaded, have a headache, have a dry mouth
- have an infusion reaction:
 - shortness of breath
 - chest tightness
 - rash
 - dizziness
 - low blood pressure
 - heart palpitations.

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