Other names for this medication:

AMSA PD® (Brand Name)  m-AMSA (Other Name)

Appearance:

Injection: Red-orange solution for injection into the bloodstream.

Why this medication is used:

Amsacrine is used to treat leukemias and lymphomas.

How do you take this medication:

Injection: Amsacrine will be injected into a vein in your arm over 1-2 hours by your chemotherapy nurse.

Precautions:

- Tell your chemotherapy nurse immediately if you feel any pain, burning or discomfort at the injection site or along the vein.
- DO NOT have any vaccinations without your cancer doctor’s approval.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist before using any other medicine, including over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, minerals, and herbal products.
- Your doctor and pharmacist will keep a record of the total number of doses of Amsacrine you receive, to reduce the possibility of heart problems.
- It is important to tell your doctor if you have chickenpox (or have recently been exposed to someone who has had chickenpox), shingles, kidney disease or liver disease, or heart rhythm problems. Any of these conditions could affect therapy with this medication.
- If a doctor has advised you to take ASA (Aspirin) to prevent heart disease or stroke, tell your cancer doctor about this before you start cancer treatment. Otherwise, DO NOT take ASA for daily aches and pains during chemotherapy treatment; use Acetaminophen (Tylenol) products instead.  
  (Check with your doctor or pharmacist if a product contains ASA or Acetaminophen.)
Precautions:

- Amsacrine is a chemotherapy drug that may be harmful to an unborn baby, or that could cause cancer in your partner or another person. Your family and friends must avoid any exposure to the drug from your vomit, urine or bowel movements. The risk to others may persist for several days after each dose of Amsacrine.

- Men taking Amsacrine should use condoms during sexual activities and neither men nor women should engage in unprotected sex with a woman who could be pregnant for as long as chemo precautions are in effect, at least 2-3 days after each dose of Amsacrine.

- Your nurse will tell you how to protect others in your home from drug exposure.

- This drug alone, or in combination with other chemotherapy drugs, may cause fatigue, reduced sex drive, reduced sexual arousal or function, reduced sexual satisfaction and changes to any intimate relationships for both men and women. This effect may last for weeks or months while on Amsacrine and afterwards.

- You and your partner should avoid a pregnancy while taking Amsacrine. Birth control pills alone may not be effective for contraception for women taking Amsacrine. It is usually recommended that you not become pregnant for at least a year after completing chemotherapy. It is important to discuss the most effective birth control with your doctor.

- Amsacrine should not be used if you are pregnant or breast feeding.

- Amsacrine may cause permanent changes in your ability to have children in the future (men or women) and to your menstrual cycle if you are a woman. Ask your doctor or nurse for more information.

- Discuss mouthcare with your doctor or nurse, including choice of toothbrush, dental floss. Check with your doctor or nurse before having dental work done.

- Your urine may be an orange colour for some time after your treatment.
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<tr>
<th>Side Effects</th>
<th>What You Should Do</th>
<th>Prevention</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Very Common:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Signs of infection/fever,</td>
<td>• Keep a thermometer at home. Recognize the signs of infection. If your</td>
<td>• Limit contact with people who are sick or</td>
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<tr>
<td>chill, cough, sore throat</td>
<td>temperature is over 38°C or 100°F, go directly to the local Emergency Department. You may have an</td>
<td>have colds. Rest often.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Low white blood cells</td>
<td>infection and need antibiotics.</td>
<td>Wash your hands often.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Bruising or bleeding.</td>
<td>• If bleeding or bruising is unusual or will not stop, contact your doctor or</td>
<td>• Use sharp objects with care. Use</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black, tar-like bowel</td>
<td>nurse immediately or go directly to the local Emergency Department.</td>
<td>a soft toothbrush. Tell your doctor</td>
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<td>movements.</td>
<td>• Do not take ASA (Aspirin); use Acetaminophen (Tylenol) instead.</td>
<td>before dental work is done.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Red spots on skin</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Low platelet count</td>
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<tr>
<td>• If vomiting is severe,</td>
<td>• Take prescribed medicine for nausea and vomiting. Continue drinking clear</td>
<td>• Maintain good mouth hygiene. Brush teeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contact your doctor or nurse</td>
<td>fluids. Get fresh air and rest. See Nausea and Vomiting pamphlet.</td>
<td>with a soft toothbrush. Avoid hot, spicy and</td>
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<tr>
<td>right away.</td>
<td>• A suppository may be ordered if you cannot keep the tablets down.</td>
<td>acidic foods.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sores in the mouth or the</td>
<td>• Contact your doctor or nurse as soon as you notice sores on mouth or lips.</td>
<td>• Limit hot, spicy, and fried foods; limit</td>
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<tr>
<td>lips</td>
<td>• See Mouth Care pamphlet.</td>
<td>foods and drinks with caffeine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Diarrhea</td>
<td>• If symptoms are severe, call your doctor or nurse right away. For less severe</td>
<td>• Avoid high fibre foods, such as bran, nuts,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>diarrhea, contact your doctor or nurse if it lasts longer than 24 to 48 hours,</td>
<td>fruits &amp; vegetables.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>or if you feel weak. Be sure to drink plenty of fluids.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>More Common:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Nausea and vomiting</td>
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<td>• Contact your doctor or</td>
<td>• Maintain good mouth hygiene. Brush teeth with a soft toothbrush. Avoid hot,</td>
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<td>nurse as soon as you notice</td>
<td>spicy and acidic foods.</td>
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<td>sores on mouth or lips</td>
<td>• See Mouth Care pamphlet.</td>
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<td>• Limit hot, spicy, and fried foods; limit foods and drinks with caffeine.</td>
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<td>• Avoid high fibre foods, such as bran, nuts, fruits &amp; vegetables</td>
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<td><strong>Less Common:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Headache, confusion, seizures, dizziness, feelings of numbness, tingling, burning sensation</td>
<td>• Contact your doctor or nurse as soon as possible.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Change in heart rate, low blood pressure</td>
<td>• Contact your doctor or nurse IMMEDIATELY. If symptoms are serious, go directly to the local Emergency Department.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Yellow-orange skin discoloration</td>
<td>• Will return to normal when drug discontinued.</td>
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<td><strong>Rare:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Jaundice, yellow in the whites of your eyes</td>
<td>• Contact your doctor or nurse.</td>
<td>• Your doctor will monitor blood tests for your liver function.</td>
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