Other names for this medication:

Adriamycin® (Brand Name) Many generic products available

Appearance:

Injection: Red coloured solution for injection into the bloodstream.

Why this medication is used:

Doxorubicin is used to treat cancers of the breast, lung, bladder, endometrium, uterus lymphomas and other types of cancer.

How do you take this medication:

Doxorubicin is injected over a few minutes by your chemotherapy nurse.

• Tell your chemotherapy nurse immediately if you feel pain, burning or stinging at injection site.

Precautions for you:

• Doxorubicin turns your urine a red colour for one-two days after administration, (this is NOT blood).

• It is important to tell your doctor or nurse if you have chickenpox (or have recently been exposed to someone who has had chickenpox), shingles, gout or kidney stones, heart or liver disease. Any of these conditions could affect therapy with this medication.

• This medication may affect your heart after several treatments. Your doctor may order special heart tests, from time to time, to see how your heart is working.

• Tell all other doctors or dentists at each visit that you are taking Doxorubicin, before you receive surgery (including dental work), vaccinations or treatment from them.

What about other medications:

• Ask your doctor or pharmacist before using any other medicine (such as Digoxin), including over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, minerals, and herbal products.

• 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 for others:

- Doxorubicin is a chemotherapy drug that may be harmful to an unborn baby, or that could cause cancer in your partner or another person. Women who are pregnant or who think they might be pregnant should not handle this drug. Your family and friends must also avoid any exposure to the drug. The risk to others may persist for several days after each dose of Doxorubicin.
- Your nurse will tell you how to protect others from exposure to the drug.

Facts about sex and pregnancy:

- Doxorubicin should not be used if you are pregnant or breast feeding.
- You and your partner should avoid a pregnancy while taking Doxorubicin. Birth control pills **alone** may not be effective for contraception for women taking Doxorubicin. 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.
- Men taking Doxorubicin 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 Doxorubicin.
- This drug alone, or in combination with other chemotherapy drugs, may cause fatigue, reduced sexual arousal or function, reduced sex drive, reduced sexual satisfaction and changes to any intimate relationships for both men and women. This effect may last for weeks or months while on Doxorubicin and afterwards.
- Doxorubicin 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.
## Side Effects

### Very Common: greater than 50 out of 100 people
- Signs of infection/ fever, chills, cough
- Low white blood cells

### What You Should Do
- Keep a thermometer at home. Recognize the signs of infection. If your temperature is over 38°C or 100°F, go directly to the local Emergency Department. You may have an infection and need antibiotics.

### Prevention
- Limit contact with people who are sick or have colds. Rest often. Wash your hands often.

### Nausea and vomiting
- If vomiting is severe, contact your doctor or nurse right away.
- If you vomit within one hour of taking antivomiting tablets, you may take another dose.

### Prevention
- Take medicine for nausea and vomiting. Continue drinking clear fluids. Get fresh air and rest.

## More Common: greater than 10 out of 100 people

### Easy bruising or bleeding.
- Black, tar-like bowel movements
- Low platelet count

### What You Should Do
- If bleeding or bruising is unusual or will not stop, contact your doctor or nurse immediately or go directly to the local Emergency Department.
- Do not take ASA, use Acetaminophen instead.

### Prevention
- Use sharp objects with care. Use a soft toothbrush. Tell your doctor before dental work is done.

### Bruising or bleeding easily.
- Black, tar-like bowel movements. Red spots on skin.
- Low platelet count

### What You Should Do
- If bleeding or bruising is unusual or will not stop, contact your doctor or nurse immediately or go directly to the local Emergency Department.
- Do not take ASA (Aspirin), use Acetaminophen (Tylenol) instead.

### Prevention
- Use sharp objects with care. Use a soft toothbrush. Be careful when shaving. Tell your doctor before any dental work is done.

### Sores in the mouth or the lips

### What You Should Do
- Contact your doctor or nurse as soon as you notice sores on mouth or lips.
- Use a soft toothbrush and floss regularly
- Rinse your mouth at least 4 times daily with a bland mouth rinse (1 tsp salt & 1 tsp baking soda in 1 litre/4 cups of water - prepare daily).
- Avoid hot, spicy or acidic foods.

### Prevention
- Maintain good mouth hygiene.
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<th>Side Effects</th>
<th>What You Should Do</th>
<th>Prevention</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>More Common: greater than 10 out of 100 people</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Hair loss (from head and body)</td>
<td>• Your hair will regrow, once all of your treatments are over.</td>
<td>• A wig, hat, cap, scarf or hair piece may be worn.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Fast/irregular heartbeats; shortness of breath, trouble breathing; swelling of feet</td>
<td>• Go directly to the local Emergency Department.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Red colour in urine (This is not blood but the drug colour)</td>
<td>• Check with your doctor or nurse at your next appointment if this bothers you.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Less Common: 1-10 out of 100 people</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Pain or redness near needle site during injection, red streaks along injected veins</td>
<td>• If you experience any of these effects, tell your chemotherapy nurse as soon as possible (while you are in the chemotherapy room).</td>
<td>• Your chemotherapy nurse will check for these symptoms during the injection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Flushing, feeling of warmth</td>
<td>• If symptoms are severe, contact your doctor or nurse immediately. For less severe diarrhea, phone your doctor or nurse if it lasts longer than 24 to 48 hours, or if you feel weak. Be sure to drink plenty of fluids.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Facial flushing, sinus congestion during drug administration</td>
<td>• Limit hot, spicy, and fried foods; limit foods and drinks with caffeine. • Avoid high fibre foods, such as bran, nuts, fruits &amp; vegetables</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Diarrhea</td>
<td>• Have several small meals a day. Eat slowly. Light exercise and fresh air may help. Drink plenty of fluids.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Loss of appetite</td>
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### Side Effects

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Less Common: 1-10 out of 100 people</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pain in the stomach along with constipation and vomiting; bleeding into the stomach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blood clots</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pain in lower legs or arms</td>
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<td>Sudden trouble breathing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduced or lost eyesight</td>
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<td>Irregular heartbeat, fluttering of the heart</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shortness of breath, heavy feeling in chest, skin turning blue colour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tiredness or weakness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skin itchiness (pruritis); usually due to dry skin; hives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased sun sensitivity; easy sunburns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### What You Should Do

| Pain in the stomach along with constipation and vomiting; bleeding into the stomach |
| Go directly to the local Emergency Department and contact your doctor or nurse as soon as possible. |
| Blood clots |
| Go directly to the local Emergency Department and contact your doctor or nurse, if you have any unusual pain or swelling in your arms or legs or difficulty breathing. |
| Irregular heartbeat, fluttering of the heart |
| Go to the local Emergency department IMMEDIATELY |
| Tiredness or weakness |
| Rest when feeling tired or weak. Do not drive a motor vehicle or operate machinery. |
| Skin itchiness (pruritis); usually due to dry skin; hives |
| For more severe dry skin, apply more lotion than usual, use lotions that contain aloe vera or dimethicone |
| Try cold compresses on hives |

### Prevention

| Avoid tight clothing, don't sit with your legs crossed at the knees, maintain an active lifestyle, and drink lots of fluid. |
| Your doctor will check your heart function at regular check-up visits |
| A special test for heart function (LVEF) may be ordered at start of treatment and once the total dose reaches a threshold level. |
| Rest as often as possible. Take naps when needed. Eat well-balanced meals. Some mild exercise, such as walking, may help. |
| Use mild, fragrance-free soaps or liquid shower gels |
| Apply lotions or bland emollients often. |

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DOXORUBICIN
### Side Effects

#### Less Common: 1-10 out of 100 people

- Darker colour in skin or nails
- Thin, reddened skin on the hands or feet
- Pain or discomfort in the hands, feet
- Prickly feeling or numbness

#### What You Should Do

- Skin and nail colour will return to normal when drug treatment is finished.
- Contact your doctor or nurse right away if you notice unusual pain in the hands or feet, prickly feeling (like they are asleep) or if you notice thinning of the skin.

#### Prevention

- Rest often, keeping off your feet.
- Wear loose footwear.
- Use a moisturizing cream on your hands (like Udder Cream or LacHydrin lotion).

#### Rare: less than 1 out of 100 people

- Difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, wheezing or other signs of allergic reaction during treatment
- Red or painful eyes
- Sensitivity to light
- Increased tears in eyes
- Changes in eyesight
- Skin reactions where you had radiation therapy may be severe
- Menstrual periods or sperm production stop
- Inability to conceive a baby
- Increased chance of a new cancer

#### What You Should Do

- Go directly to the local Emergency Department and contact your doctor or nurse.
- Contact your doctor or nurse as soon as possible.
- Contact your doctor or nurse to discuss these issues and your options.

#### Prevention

- Warm eye soaks
- Wear close-fitting glasses or sunglasses
- Use lubricating eye products without preservatives such as lubricating eye drops, gels, gel inserts or ointments and artificial tears, 4-6 times daily
- Use a humidifier to moisten indoor air and change furnace air filters often
- Your nurse or doctor may speak with you about sperm or egg banking if you are at risk of permanent fertility loss and still hope to start a family in future.
- Report any unusual symptoms to your doctor