

# ASPARAGINASE



**This leaflet should be used in conjunction with the complete consumer medicine information (CMI) which is available from any pharmacy.**

This leaflet contains information about Asparaginase including details of known side effects. It does not include every possible side effect.

The type and severity of side effects experienced differs for each child. Some side effects are minor and easily treated at home. However, others may be more serious and require prompt medical assessment. Side effects from treatment are routinely monitored with blood tests and clinical examination. If you have any questions about side effects during treatment, please speak to your doctor. Also, if your child experiences any problems or side effects during treatment, please contact your doctor, clinical nurse consultant/coordinator or pharmacy staff for advice.

## OTHER NAMES

- E coli L-asparaginase
- Erwinia L-asparaginase
- Pegasparaginase

## PRESENTATION

- A clear to slightly cloudy liquid drawn up in a syringe or bag

## ADMINISTRATION

- Intramuscular injection
- Intravenous infusion

## SIDE EFFECTS *Continued overleaf*

### Common

<b>IMMEDIATE</b> (within 1-2 days of receiving drug)	<b>DELAYED</b> (within 1-2 weeks of receiving drug)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Redness, itching, swelling at injection site</li><li>• Nausea (more common at higher doses)</li><li>• Lethargy</li><li>• Fatigue</li><li>• Loss of appetite</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Decreased production of clotting factors and other blood proteins</li><li>• Depression (more common in adolescents)</li></ul>

### Less common

- Allergic reactions which may be life-threatening. Symptoms of a severe reaction may include skin rash or hives, swelling or tingling of the lips and face, difficulty breathing and low blood pressure which may lead to collapse. For this reason, doses must be given where full resuscitation equipment is available and patients observed following the injection. However, reactions may sometimes occur several hours later. Seek medical attention **immediately** if any of the above symptoms occur.
- Liver problems.

## SIDE EFFECTS (CONT.)

### Rare

- Seizures
  - Inflammation of the pancreas which may lead to high blood sugar levels
  - Blot clot formation
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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Report any redness or swelling at the injection site to your doctor.
- Sometimes it is necessary to change from one type of Asparaginase to another if a reaction has occurred.
- Avoid excessive exposure to sunlight and use a high SPF sunscreen.
- Keep ALL medication out of the reach of children.

## CONTACT

For further information, or to discuss any concerns you may have about your child's medication, please feel free to contact the Children's Cancer Centre of your child's treating hospital:

- The Royal Children's Hospital Oncology Pharmacy (03) 9345 6290
- Monash Children's Hospital Cancer Centre (03) 8572 3456 or Pharmacist desk (03) 8572 3464

Disclaimer: This information has been prepared by the Paediatric Integrated Cancer Service, with input from the Children's Cancer Centre Pharmacy Departments at The Royal Children's Hospital and Monash Children's Hospital. This information is for educational purposes only and should not be seen as a substitute for advice from your doctor or other professional healthcare provider. If you have specific questions about the content of this information, or any other medical matter, it is recommended that you consult your doctor, pharmacist or other professional healthcare provider. This information is considered to be true and correct at the date of publication, however changes in circumstances after the time of publication may impact on the accuracy of this information.

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