

Patient Treatment Information

FOLFIRI + Bevacizumab

Your chemotherapy treatment is called FOLFIRI + bevacizumab. It is commonly used to treat colon and rectal cancer and has also been used to treat other diseases. FOLFIRI + bevacizumab is made up of four drugs:

- 5-fluorouracil (5FU), (five-flure-oh-YOOR-a-sill)
- leucovorin (loo-koe-VOR-in)
- irinotecan (eye-ri-noe-TEE-kan) or Camptosar® (CAMP-toe-zar)
- bevacizumab (be-va-SIZ-you-mab) or Avastin® (ah-VA-stin)

5FU and irinotecan prevent cancer cells from dividing and growing, and can eventually cause cancer cells to shrink and die. Leucovorin is used to increase the activity of 5FU. Bevacizumab is a new type of drug, called a monoclonal antibody, which targets cancer cells more precisely than chemotherapy drugs.

What Do I Need to Know Before Starting Treatment?

Be sure to tell your healthcare provider about any prescription or over-the-counter products you are taking, including dietary supplements, vitamins, herbal medicines and homeopathic remedies.

Use an effective birth control method while you are taking these drugs. Chemotherapy drugs can cause harm to a fetus, so be sure to tell your healthcare provider right away if you or your partner become pregnant.

Avoid breastfeeding during treatment. It is not known if these drugs pass into breast milk.

Some chemotherapy drugs can cause sterility. Talk with your healthcare provider about your options if you want to have children in the future.

Do not get any immunizations or vaccinations while taking chemotherapy drugs without the approval of your healthcare provider.

What Do I Need to Know Before Starting FOLFIRI + Bevacizumab?

5-FU and bevacizumab can cause heart problems such as a heart attack, irregular heart beat, angina and heart failure. This may be more common in patients with a history of heart disease. Call your healthcare provider immediately if you have back pain, flushing or chest tightness.

Irinotecan commonly causes diarrhea, which can occur early or late in your treatment. Tell your healthcare provider if you are taking a laxative or stool softener since these medicines make diarrhea worse.

- Early diarrhea occurs within 24 hours of treatment. Tell your healthcare provider immediately if you have watery eyes, a runny nose, increased salivation, stomach cramps, flushing or sweating during or after your treatment. If you have early diarrhea, you may need to be treated with a drug called atropine.
- Delayed diarrhea occurs one to several days after treatment. It usually peaks at about eleven days after your treatment. The diarrhea can be very severe and lead to dehydration and hospitalization.
- You should have loperamide (Imodium A-D®) available before you begin treatment so you can start taking it immediately at the first sign of loose or more frequent stools. The recommended dose on the loperamide package is not enough to treat diarrhea caused by irinotecan.
- Unless otherwise directed by your healthcare provider, take 4 mg (two tablets or capsules) of loperamide followed by 2 mg (one tablet or capsule) every two hours until you are diarrhea-free for at least 12 hours. At night, take 4 mg (two tablets or capsules) every four hours. Call your healthcare provider if the diarrhea continues for more than one day or if you feel lightheaded, dizzy or faint.

In rare cases, irinotecan can cause inflammation of the large intestine and bevacizumab can cause gastrointestinal perforation (holes in the stomach, intestines or colon) that must be repaired through surgery. These side effects can cause ulceration, bleeding and infection in the intestines. Tell your healthcare provider if

you have sudden abdominal pain, rectal bleeding, blood in the stool, nausea, vomiting, constipation or fever. You may be given antibiotics if necessary.

Side effects can be more severe in older patients and in those who have had radiation therapy to the pelvis or abdomen. Tell your healthcare provider if you have ever had radiation.

In rare cases, irinotecan can cause a severe allergic reaction. Tell your healthcare provider if you notice a skin rash, itching, chills, redness of the face, dizziness, headache or shortness of breath.

In rare cases, irinotecan can cause severe kidney problems. This is more common in patients who become dehydrated because of severe diarrhea or vomiting.

Irinotecan can cause irritation if it accidentally leaks out of the vein. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have redness, pain, burning or swelling around the injection site during your treatment.

In rare cases, bevacizumab can cause severe infusion reactions, such as trouble breathing, very high blood pressure, wheezing, chest pain, headache, chills and sweating. If this reaction occurs, it is usually with the first dose.

Bevacizumab can cause slow or incomplete wound healing. Tell your healthcare provider if you have wounds that do not heal. You should not have any elective surgery while being treated with bevacizumab.

Mild bleeding, such as nosebleeds, is common with bevacizumab. If you have a nosebleed, sit with your head tipped slightly forward and pinch the bridge of your nose. Call your healthcare provider if you feel dizzy or faint, or if the bleeding doesn't stop after 10 to 15 minutes.

Bevacizumab may cause a severe increase in blood pressure. Your healthcare provider will check your blood pressure regularly and may give you medicine to treat high blood pressure.

Bevacizumab can cause too much protein in the urine, which can lead to kidney damage. Your healthcare provider will check your urine regularly for signs of kidney damage.

In rare cases, bevacizumab can cause serious blood clots that can result in stroke. Older adults may be most likely to develop blood clots. It can also cause other heart problems, so tell your healthcare provider if you have a history of heart disease.

Your treatment can interact with other substances, including:

- Warfarin (Coumadin®)
- Ketoconazole (Nizoral®), fluconazole (Diflucan®) or itraconazole (Sporanox®)
- St. John's wort
- Cimetidine (Tagamet®)
- Diltiazem, verapamil or nifedipine
- Phenytoin (Dilantin®), phenobarbital (Luminal®) or carbamazepine (Tegretol®)
- Rifampin or rifabutin
- Atazanavir (Reyataz®)
- Thyroid medications
- Diuretics

Please note this list is a summary and does not contain all possible drug interactions. Contact your healthcare provider if you are taking any medications that can interact with your treatment.

You should not take this treatment if you:

- Are allergic to 5FU, leucovorin, irinotecan, bevacizumab or any components of these drugs.
- Have a condition known as dihydropyrimidine dehydrogenase (DPD) deficiency.

How Is the Treatment Given?

Your healthcare provider will give you your treatment by injection into a vein. The dose you receive will be based on your weight and height. Your healthcare provider will determine the number of treatments you receive.

You may be given medicines to help prevent and control nausea and vomiting before you receive your treatment. These medicines may be given either by mouth or by injection into a vein.

If you are given any medicine to take at home, do not share it with others. Sharing this medication with anyone else could be harmful.

When Should I Call My Healthcare Provider?

Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Shaking chills or fever 100.5 degrees F or higher
- Unusual bleeding, easy bruising or pinpoint red spots on your skin
- Vomiting that is severe or lasts several hours
- Painful or frequent urination or blood in your urine
- Diarrhea that causes an additional four bowel movements a day, diarrhea that lasts more than one day, diarrhea at night or diarrhea with fever, cramps or bloody stools
- Irregular or rapid heart beat, chest pain, chest tightness or shortness of breath
- Dizziness or feeling lightheaded
- Inability to eat or weight loss

What Are the Possible Side Effects?

All drugs can cause side effects, but every person reacts differently to each drug. The following chart lists the possible side effects that can occur with your treatment, how to recognize and minimize symptoms and possible treatments. The side effects are grouped by how often the side effect occurs: Common (occurs in more than 25 percent of patients), Less Common (occurs in 5 to 25 percent of patients) or Rare (occurs in less than 5 percent of patients).

Side Effect	How to Minimize Side Effect	Possible Treatments
<p>Risk of Infection (Common)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever and chills • Painful urination • Sore throat and cough • Nasal congestion • Swelling or redness of the skin at the site of a wound 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash your hands often. • Brush and floss your teeth daily. • Clean cuts right away with warm water, soap and antiseptic. • When your white blood cell count is low, stay away from crowds and people with colds or other illnesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may be given medicine to increase your white blood cell count. • You may be given an antibiotic to treat or prevent infection. • Your healthcare provider may decrease your chemotherapy dose or delay further chemotherapy.
<p>Nausea/Vomiting (Common. Symptoms are generally mild to moderate but can be severe.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling queasy or sick to your stomach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat small, frequent meals and bland foods—such as bananas, rice, applesauce and toast. • Eat food cold or at room temperature so the smell of food will not bother you. • Avoid fried, spicy or fatty foods. • Eat and drink slowly. • Drink plenty of liquids during the day, but to avoid bloating, drink small amounts of liquid during meals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will be given medicine to help reduce nausea and vomiting.
<p>Diarrhea (Common. Symptoms are generally mild to moderate but can be severe.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loose or watery stools several times a day • Abdominal cramping, gas and bloating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat small, frequent meals and bland foods—such as bananas, rice, applesauce and toast. • Avoid caffeine; alcohol; raw fruits and vegetables; raw eggs; undercooked meats; spicy, fatty and greasy foods; milk and dairy products; foods that cause gas, such as beans and other legumes; high fiber and high-fat foods; foods left un-refrigerated for more than two hours (one hour for egg dishes and cream or mayonnaise-based foods); bulk laxatives; and stool softeners.. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See “What Do I Need To Know Before Starting FOLFIRI + Bevacizumab?”

Side Effect	How to Minimize Side Effect	Possible Treatments
<p>Mouth Sores and Pain (Common. Symptoms are generally mild to moderate.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pain, swelling or redness of the mouth, tongue and throat • “Coated tongue” • Difficulty talking, swallowing or eating • Bleeding ulcers and infection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brush teeth two to four times a day using a soft bristle brush and fluoride toothpaste. • Use non-waxed dental floss daily. • Ask your healthcare provider to recommend a mouthwash that does not contain alcohol. • Sip water during the day and use sugar-free candy or gum to keep your mouth wet. • Eat food cold or at room temperature. • Eat soft or pureed food. • Avoid food that is acidic, spicy, salty, dry or rough, such as toast. • Sucking on ice chips for 10 to 15 minutes before and after fluorouracil injections may help relieve the pain of mouth sores. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may be given medicine to help treat pain. • You may be given medicine to treat fungal or viral infections.
<p>Anorexia or Appetite Loss (Common)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not having an appetite • Feeling too nauseated to eat • Metallic or medicinal taste • Change in taste causing dislike for certain foods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try eating six to eight small meals or snacks each day instead of three larger meals. • Vary your diet and try new foods and recipes. • Take a walk before meals, when possible. This may make you feel hungrier. • Eat with friends or family. When eating alone, listen to the radio or watch TV. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cook dinners ahead of time and freeze them in small portions so that cooking smells are minimized. • Let others help with food, but ask that foods be prepared in small portions that can be frozen. And don't hesitate to let them know which foods to avoid. • Add mild spices to change flavor. • It might be helpful to have a program, such as Meals on Wheels, deliver food to you.
<p>Alopecia or Hair Loss (Common)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than normal amount of hair loss in your brush, in the shower or on your pillow after sleeping • Loss of body hair 	<p>Alopecia cannot be prevented but here are tips to help with hair loss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a soft hairbrush. Do not use brush rollers, color treat your hair or get a permanent. • Avoid daily hair washing, use a mild shampoo and avoid using a hairdryer, or use a low setting if you must use one. • Have your hair cut short; this will make it look fuller. • Your insurance might cover a wig. Ask your healthcare provider for a prescription for a "hair prosthesis". Your hair color and style can be better matched if you shop for a wig before losing a lot of hair. • Use sunscreen or wear a hat or scarf to protect your scalp from the sun. 	
<p>Hand-Foot Syndrome (Less Common. Symptoms are generally mild.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swelling or redness in the hands and feet that can prevent normal activity • Cracked or peeling skin • Tingling, numbness or pain in the hands or soles of the feet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear gloves to wash dishes. • Avoid using harsh household cleaners. • Avoid prolonged exposure to heat. • Use creams or moisturizers regularly. Try wearing cotton gloves on your hands. • Avoid using perfume, cologne or aftershave since these products can be irritating to the skin. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your healthcare provider may prescribe a cream to help with skin reactions. • Your healthcare provider may need to decrease the dose or delay further chemotherapy.
<p>Neuropathy (Less Common)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbness or tingling feeling in the hands or feet • Muscle cramps • Loss of balance • Difficulty buttoning buttons or picking up objects • Decreased awareness of heat or cold in fingertips and toes • Difficulty hearing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to avoid the cold or extreme heat. • Wear mittens or gloves, socks and scarves. • If your fingers are numb, be careful with sharp objects. • Beware of hot coffee mugs, pots and pans and dishwasher—you may not feel the heat until you are burned. • If you feel unsteady, be careful on stairs and in the shower. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your healthcare provider may decrease your chemotherapy dose or delay further chemotherapy.

Side Effect	How to Minimize Side Effect	Possible Treatments
Bleeding (Rare) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unusual bleeding or easy bruising Black or tar-like stools Blood in your urine Pinpoint red spots on your skin Bleeding gums or nosebleeds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid aspirin and aspirin-like drugs, such as ibuprofen. Use caution with sharp objects, such as razors and nail cutters. Avoid activities that can cause cuts, bumps and bruises. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may be given medicine to increase your platelet count. Your healthcare provider may decrease your chemotherapy dose or delay further chemotherapy.
Anemia (Rare) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fatigue or weakness Dizziness Pale skin Feeling out of breath Feeling cold 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan rest periods throughout the day. Organize daily activities so that you conserve your energy. Try to eat a well balanced diet and drink plenty of fluids. Stand up slowly to avoid getting dizzy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may be given medicine to increase your red blood cell count. Your healthcare provider may decrease your chemotherapy dose or delay further chemotherapy.

What Are The Other Possible Side Effects?

The chart below lists additional side effects found with the individual drugs in this treatment. It does not list all possible side effects. For more information, talk with your healthcare provider.

Common Side Effects	Less Common Side Effects	Rare Side Effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skin discoloration Weakness or fatigue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Body pain, headache or back pain Shortness of breath Cough or runny nose Dizziness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitivity of the skin to the sun Blood clot related conditions, such as stroke and chest pain Decrease in heart rate

Notes

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