

Bevacizumab

Avastin

This handout explains the drug bevacizumab, which is used to treat cancer. It includes common side effects and what to do when they occur.

What is bevacizumab?

Bevacizumab is a drug used to treat cancer. It is a *monoclonal antibody* that targets cancer cells and causes them to die. But, it can also affect some normal cells and cause side effects.

The drug is pronounced “be va SIZ you mab.” One brand name of the drug is Avastin.

How will I receive the drug?

Bevacizumab is given as an *infusion* through an *intravenous* (IV) line into a vein in your arm. On the day of your infusion:

- Arrive at UW Medical Center - Montlake at least 90 minutes before your infusion appointment.
- Go to the Outpatient Lab on the 3rd floor of the hospital. There you will have blood drawn. On some days, you will also provide a urine sample.
- Then go to the 8-Southeast (8SE) Infusion Center for your infusion. Take the Cascade elevators to the 8th floor.
- Plan on being in the Infusion Center for at least 1 hour for the entire infusion process.



Talk with your nurse if you have any questions about your infusion.

Vaccine Warning

While you are on bevacizumab, talk with your provider **before** getting any vaccines. This includes flu shots or a COVID-19 vaccine.

What side effects can I expect?

The tables on pages 2 and 3 show common and less common side effects that can occur with bevacizumab, and what to do about them. Other side effects may also occur. **Please report any symptoms to your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse.**

Common Side Effects and What to Do

Side Effect	What to Do
<p><i>These reactions are common during the first infusion:</i> Chills, fever (common)</p> <p><i>These reactions are rare with later infusions:</i> Nausea, vomiting, pain, shivering, low blood pressure, shortness of breath (less common)</p>	<p>Tell your nurse or doctor right away if you have a reaction during your first infusion. The nurse may slow down the infusion or give you other medicines to treat the reaction.</p>
<p>High blood pressure</p>	<p>Tell your doctor if you have had high blood pressure (BP) in the past. We will check your BP before each infusion. If it is high, your doctor may start you on a medicine to lower it.</p>
<p>Slow wound healing</p>	<p>Tell your nurse if you have any open wounds. Call your nurse if an open wound appears.</p> <p>Do NOT have surgery or dental procedures for 28 days before and after your bevacizumab treatments.</p>
<p>Bleeding</p>	<p>You may be at a higher risk for bleeding. This means you may get nose bleeds or bruise more easily.</p> <p>If you have a bloody nose that lasts longer than 10 minutes or have any bleeding that does stop, tell your nurse right away.</p>
<p>Too much protein in your urine (<i>proteinuria</i>)</p>	<p>From time to time, your doctor will check your urine before an infusion.</p> <p>Tell your nurse right away if you notice that you are urinating less or less often than usual.</p>

Less Common Side Effects and What to Do

Side Effect	What to Do
Blood clots	Tell your nurse right away if you have pain, swelling, or redness in your lower legs. These can be signs of a blood clot.
Low white blood cells	Your white blood cells may be lower during treatment. This can increase your risk for an infection. Tell your nurse if you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a fever higher than 100. 4°F (38°C) • Have a cough that brings up mucus • Feel burning when you urinate
Bowel perforation (holes)	Call 911 or go to the emergency room right away if you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have severe pain in your belly • Have black tarry stools • Are coughing up blood • Have vomit that looks like coffee grounds
Nervous system and vision problems	Call 911 or go to an emergency room right away if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You get a sudden or severe headache • You have problems seeing, talking, or walking
Stroke or heart problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell your doctor or nurse if you have ever had a stroke, heart attack, or chest pain. • Call 911 right away if you have chest pain, sudden weakness, or feel confused or dizzy.

Birth Control (Contraception) and Fertility

Before starting therapy:

- Please talk with your provider if you have any questions about fertility. Bevacizumab may affect your ability to have a child.
- If you were assigned female at birth, you will have a pregnancy test.

While on bevacizumab:

- If you were assigned female at birth, do **not** become pregnant or breastfeed.
- If you were assigned male at birth, do **not** get a partner pregnant.
- If you are of childbearing age:
 - Use contraception during therapy and for at least 1 month taking after your dose.
 - Use a barrier form of protection for 48 hours after dose, since the drug is found in bodily fluids during that time.

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Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

To talk with a nurse:

Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., call 206.598.2282 and select option 2.

After hours and on weekends and holidays, call our Community Care Line at 206.598.3300.