

Asparaginase (Elspar®, Erwinase®)

How does this medicine work?

Asparaginase (as-par-a-gin-ace) destroys leukemia cancer cells in all phases of cell life.

How is it given?

It is given by injection (shot) into the muscle in the hospital or clinic.

What are the side effects?

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Common | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• change in blood clotting factors |
| Occasional | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• mild nausea• vomiting• high blood sugar• headache• fatigue• loss of appetite• signs of allergic reaction:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- fever or chills- redness at injection site- rash or hives- wheezing- trouble breathing |
| Rare | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• changes in liver or kidney function• loss of appetite• pancreatitis• blood clot in artery or vein |

When should I call the doctor?

- fever, chills
- unusual bleeding or bruising
- unable to move arms or legs
- joint or stomach pain
- pain with urination or urinating more than normal
- extremely thirsty
- signs of allergic reaction:
 - redness at injection site
 - rash, itching, or hives
 - wheezing
 - trouble breathing - **call 911**

What else do I need to know?

Due to the chance of allergic reactions, your child should stay in the clinic for observation for 30 to 60 minutes after the medicine is given. There are 3 types of asparaginase. Another type may be given if an allergic reaction occurs.

All caregivers should wear gloves when handling urine, stool, and vomit while your child is receiving the chemotherapy and for 48 hours afterward. Urine, stool, and vomit can be safely disposed of in septic tanks and the sewer system.

Any clothing or bed linens that are contaminated with urine, stool, or vomit should be washed separately from other laundry in hot water and detergent. Anyone handling the contaminated laundry should wear gloves.

The urine will need to be checked at times for glucose (sugar).

You and your child should know the names of all the medicines he or she is taking. **Share this information** with anyone involved in your child's care.

Questions?

This sheet is not specific to your child, but provides general information. If you have any questions about your child's condition, please call the oncology clinic or pharmacy.

For more reading material about this and other health topics, please call or visit the Family Resource Center library, or visit our Web site: www.childrensmn.org.

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