

Amifostine (Ethyol®)

How does this medicine work?

Amifostine (am-i-fos-tine) protects the kidneys and bladder from the effects of the chemotherapy medicines cisplatin and carboplatin, and the salivary glands from the effects of radiation. It may also protect the hearing system, bone marrow, and other body functions.

How is it given?

Amifostine is given in one of two ways:

- IV over 15 minutes, right before chemotherapy.
- subcutaneous injection in the upper arm, thigh or abdomen, in the hospital 15 to 30 minutes before radiation treatment.

Are there any precautions about food or other medications?

Blood pressure medicines should not be given for 24 hours before the amifostine.

What are the side effects?

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|------------|---|
| Common | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• low blood pressure• severe nausea• vomiting• flushing sensation |
| Occasional | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• dizziness• sleepiness• sneezing• low calcium in the blood• low magnesium in the blood |
| Rare | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• hiccups• fever• rash |

When should I call the clinic?

- fever higher than 101.5° F (38.6° C)
- dizziness
- sleepiness
- rash
- trouble breathing - **call 911**

What else do I need to know?

Before the amifostine, IV fluids are given to prevent or decrease low blood pressure. Medicines are also given, to prevent or decrease nausea and vomiting.

It is important to lie flat and still during the infusion, to help prevent the side effects of low blood pressure, nausea, and vomiting. These side effects go away within minutes after the infusion. It is helpful to stay flat with eyes closed for up to 30 minutes after the infusion, until the side effects go away.

Blood pressure will be watched closely. More IV fluids will be given if blood pressure is low.

Blood tests will be needed to check calcium and magnesium levels. If the levels are low, the doctor or nurse practitioner will prescribe some to take by mouth.

Icing or using anesthetic cream at the injection site is not recommended due to the chance of decreased drug absorption.

Questions?

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