

How does the drug work?

Procarbazine is one of the group medicines known as alkylating agents and they exert their effect by interfering with the growth of certain cells within the body.

What is it used for?

Procarbazine can be used as one of the chemotherapy drugs to treat certain cancers. Specifically, it is used for the treatment of Hodgkin's Lymphoma (a cancer of the lymph glands) and some brain tumours.

How is it taken?

Procarbazine is an oral capsule that is to be taken by mouth and is best taken after a light breakfast to reduce stomach upset.

Dosage

The dose of Procarbazine varies depending on the height and weight of the patient.

Special precautions

Ensure that your hospital doctor is aware if all the medicines that the patient usually takes and about medicines that have ever caused an allergic reaction.

It is important to use effective contraception as Procarbazine, when taken by either men or women may cause birth defects. Please discuss this with your Doctor.

Diet information

While you are taking the Procarbazine, it is important that you avoid certain foods. The foods listed in the table below may interact with Procarbazine and cause severe reactions, such as headache, heart palpitations, high blood pressure, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. These reactions are caused by the alcohol and/or tyramine content of the food or drink.

The diet changes recommended in the table below should be followed during the days when you are taking Procarbazine, and also for 10-14 days after you have finished the medication.

Food Groups	Allowed	Avoid	Cautions or Limit to 1 serving of 1 item per day
Alcoholic beverages	None	All alcoholic beverages including beer and wine	None
Milk & milk products	All milk drinks; cream, cottage, ricotta & processed cheese. All milk & milk products to be used well within "BEST BEFORE" date.	All other cheeses, especially aged cheese; foods containing aged cheese	Chocolate milk, cultured milk products: buttermilk, yoghurt, and sour cream
Breads & Cereals	All	Any containing cheese	None
Meat & Alternatives	Eggs; meat, fish, and poultry that are allowed should be freshly prepared. Refrigerated storage should be brief.	Smoked or pickled fish (e.g. herring); aged & fermented meats, fish, poultry, and game; corned beef; liver; liver pate; dry fermented sausage (e.g. salami, pepperoni)	Fresh/canned tuna & anchovies
Fruit & Vegetables	All except those to avoid	Broad beanpods (e.g. lima, fava beans, Chinese pea pods); sauerkraut; overly ripe fruits & vegetables	*Raisins; ripe avocado; raspberries
Fats & Oils	All	None	None
Miscellaneous	Baker's yeast	Yeast vitamin supplements (e.g. Brewer's yeast); yeast and meat extracts (e.g. Oxo®, Bovril®, Marmite®)	Dried soup and gravy bases; *chocolate; caffeine; *soy sauce

*Small quantities recommended

What to do if you miss a dose

If you remember, take the capsule later in the day but do not double the dose the next day. Inform your hospital doctor at the next visit if any doses were missed.

Other drugs/medicines

Some pain killers and anti-depressants may cause a severe high blood pressure reaction if taken while you are being prescribed Procarbazine. It is safe to use plain paracetamol or aspirin.

Procarbazine may affect blood sugar levels in diabetics.

Always let your hospital doctor know if you intend to have an immunisation. Live vaccines must be avoided.

Alcohol should not be taken while you are taking Procarbazine.

Possible side effects

Nausea and vomiting and bowel upsets may occur. Procarbazine may also cause drowsiness and confusion.

Procarbazine may suppress the bone marrow and make you susceptible to infection due to a low white blood cell count. It is important that you let your doctor know if you notice unusual bruising or bleeding, if you have a fever or mouth ulcers and/or if you are feeling confused or having hallucinations.

How to store Procarbazine capsules

Keep out of reach and sight of children – preferably in a locked cupboard or medicine cabinet. Keep the capsules in their original container in a dry place below 25°C.

Please return any unused medicines to your pharmacist.

References

Procarbazine – Diet Information. Hamilton Regional Cancer Centre & Cancer Care Ontario Professional Pharmacy Advisory Committee-Medication Information Sheets Working Group. October 2004

Summary of Product Characteristics for Procarbazine updated 31/8/2010
Patient Information Leaflet for Procarbazine last approved July 2010

Procarbazine Patient Information. North Devon Healthcare NHS Trust



Kent and Medway Cancer Network

Patient Information Leaflet

Procarbazine Capsules 50mg

Written by: K Miller KMCN
Ratified by: Brain NOG May 2011
Network Chemotherapy Group May 2011