

Medical Oncology

Drug Information Sheet

Cetuximab (Erbix): a drug to treat your cancer.

How will you get this drug? A Cancer Center nurse will give this drug to you through an IV or your port. The first dose will be given over 2 hours. The rest of the doses will be given over 60 minutes.

You **MAY OR MAY NOT** experience the side effects listed below

Possible Side Effects:	What to do:
Increased risk for infection due to decreased blood counts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid contact with people who have infections, colds or flu. • Wash your hands often. • Report chills or a fever of 100.4° or higher to your doctor right away, day or night. • Report any signs or symptoms of infection, such as cough, burning with urination, skin redness or sores. • Call your doctor before taking any medicine for a fever or chills.
Breathing problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call your doctor right away if you have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ severe shortness of breath or trouble breathing ○ labored and unusually rapid breathing ○ new or dry cough or a cough that gets worse ○ confusion ○ extreme tiredness ○ wheezing ○ chest pain • Call 911 if you cannot catch your breath or stop coughing.
Fatigue or weakness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may be more tired than usual or have less energy. • Stay as active as possible, but know it is okay to rest as needed. • Try to do some activity every day. • Plan your activities, and do them at a time of day when you feel more energetic. • Avoid driving or doing other tasks that call for you to be alert.
Neuropathy Numbness or tingling in hands or feet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell the doctor if this occurs or worsens. • Be careful because you may not feel an injury to your hands or feet that have reduced feeling or numbness. • Check areas that are numb for redness or open sores. Do this every day. • Apply cream or lotion to your hands and feet. • Avoid wearing tight footwear. • Avoid standing for long periods of time. • May continue even after treatment has stopped. • These nerve problems can get worse each time you get this drug. • Sometimes, these nerve problems have not gone away after treatment stops.

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<u>Possible Side Effects:</u>	<u>What to do:</u>
Headache	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can begin during treatment and lasts 24-72 hours. • Usually decreases after first few infusions. • Use pain medicine as prescribed. Call your doctor if the pain is not under control. Do not take Aspirin. • Call your doctor if your headache <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Follows a head injury ○ lasts more than 48 hours ○ is severe or starts suddenly ○ is associated with vomiting, visual disturbance, neck stiffness, drowsiness, confusion, rash, weakness in arm or leg, or numbness; or is made worse by coughing or lowering the head.
Severe skin and mouth reactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acne-like skin reactions (starts within 2 weeks, lasts for 1 month after stopping <i>Cetuximab (ertibux)</i>) • Use a moisturizing cream free from alcohol, perfume or dye at least twice a day. • When outside, use sunscreen and wear clothing and eyewear that protects you from the sun. Avoid being in the sun during treatment and for 2 months after stopping treatment with <i>Cetuximab (Erbitux)</i>. • Choose mild soaps. • Use tepid water, rather than hot water. • Wear loose-fitting cotton clothing. • Apply cool, wet cloth to soothe skin. • Avoid using perfumes and cologne. • Avoid rubbing and scratching. • Call your doctor if you have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A skin rash ○ red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin ○ red or irritated eyes ○ sores in your mouth, throat, nose or eyes • Your doctor may prescribe anti-inflammation creams or antibiotics by mouth. • Skin care kits are available.
Nausea/vomiting Decreased appetite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take nausea medicine as instructed. Let your doctor know if it is not working for you. • Eat smaller, frequent meals. • Try liquid nutrition supplements (Boost, Ensure) • A dietitian is available to talk with you.

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Possible Side Effects:	What to do:
Nail changes/toxicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Darkening and ridging of fingernails may happen. It will go away when the treatment is finished. • Your nails and cuticles may become red, sore, swollen, and brittle. Your nails may separate from the nail bed and your nail may fall off • Call your doctor if you have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ redness, swelling, peeling, or tenderness around nails of hands or feet ○ any skin redness, itching, or rash ○ draining fluid from your nail ○ a hard time walking or using your hands ○ chills or a fever of 100.4° F or higher • Take care of your nails: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Keep nails trimmed and clean ○ Do not cut nails too short ○ Do not bite, pick or tear at your nails or cuticles ○ Do not cut your cuticles ○ Apply moisturizing lotion often ○ Avoid using hot water ○ Avoid standing for long times ○ Wear gloves to wash dishes ○ Wear comfortable shoes with soft cotton socks to prevent injuries ○ Do not use artificial nails
Low magnesium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lab work will be checked. • Let your doctor know if you have symptoms of low magnesium like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ mood changes ○ confusion ○ abnormal eye movements ○ muscle pain or weakness ○ heartbeat that does not feel normal ○ seizures ○ fatigue ○ very bad upset stomach ○ throwing up
Constipation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink water and other fluids frequently during the day. • Eat foods high in fiber. • Do mild exercise such as walking. • Talk to your pharmacist about over the counter medicines. • Report if over-the-counter medicines are not working.

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Possible Side Effects:	What to do:
Diarrhea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep well hydrated with water or fluids. • Take over the counter anti-diarrhea medicine (Immodium A-D™ or loperamide HCL). Use the “<i>Helpful Tips for Diarrhea after Chemotherapy or Radiation Therapy</i>” instruction sheet. • Call your doctor if you have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More than 4 loose stools in 24 hours ○ A fever of 100.4° or higher ○ bad stomach pain or cramps ○ dizziness or feel faint ○ bloody stools (dark, tarry or sticky)
Stomatitis Sores in your throat or mouth (stomatitis) may occur a few days or a few weeks after medicine is given.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let your nurse or doctor know if you have sores in your mouth. • Avoid spicy, hot or cold foods. • Avoid using tobacco products, alcohol and mouthwashes that contain alcohol. • Mix 1/4 teaspoon of baking soda and 1/8 teaspoon of salt with 2 cups of water. Rinse your mouth and gargle the mixture at least four times daily, especially after you eat. Do not swallow this mixture, just rinse and spit. • Use a soft toothbrush. • Your doctor may prescribe a special mouthwash for you to use.
Liver problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lab results will be checked. • Call your doctor if you have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ dark urine (tea colored) ○ severe right sided stomach pain ○ light colored stools ○ bruising or if you start to bleed easily ○ yellowing of skin or eyes ○ severe nausea or throwing up ○ unexplained weight gain ○ your belly feels big or bloated
Cetuximab (ertibux) will be in urine and stool for 48 hours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers will need to handle soiled linens and clothing wearing gloves or using a bag as a barrier. • Keep your soiled items separate from others’ dirty laundry and wash right away. • Women who are pregnant should not handle your soiled clothing or linens. • Wash any skin that body waste has touched with soap and water. • You may use the same toilet that you normally use. • If the toilet or toilet seat becomes dirty with urine, stool or vomit, clean the surfaces before other people use the toilet • Wash hands with soap and water after using the toilet. • It is safe to hug and kiss.

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Possible Side Effects:	What to do:
Avoid pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This drug may cause harm to the unborn baby if you take it while you are pregnant. If you are pregnant or you get pregnant while taking this drug, call your doctor right away. • Use birth control that you can trust to prevent pregnancy while taking this drug and for 2 months after stopping this drug. • If you or your sex partner gets pregnant while taking this drug or within 2 months after stopping this drug, call your doctor right away. • May cause fertility problems.

Less common side effects that may happen	What to do:
<i>Cetuximab (Erbix)</i> may increase risk of heart attack especially with head and neck cancers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell your doctor if you have a history of coronary artery disease, heart failure or an abnormal heart rhythm • Call 911 right away if you have any of these symptoms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chest pain or chest discomfort or tightness that may spread to your neck, jaw or back. ○ Cold sweat ○ Shortness of breath or trouble breathing ○ severe dizziness and fainting.

Serious allergic reactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call the nurse right away for unusual feelings, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ hot or flushed face and neck ○ fever ○ chills ○ pain in the abdomen or back ○ trouble breathing or wheezing ○ chest tightness ○ swelling of your face, lips, or tongue ○ a rash ○ itching ○ hives ○ cough ○ runny or stuffy nose • You will receive medicines before your treatment to help prevent a reaction. There will be a 30-minute wait after your pre-medicines before you receive your treatment. • You will be observed for 30 minutes after your treatment is finished • Call 911 and go to the Emergency Department right away if you have any symptoms after you return home
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These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor.