

# Medical Oncology

## Drug Information Sheet

**Fluorouracil (5FU, adrucil):** a drug to treat your cancer.

**How will you get this drug?** A Cancer Care nurse will give this drug to you through an IV or your port. Some treatments require a continuous infusion ranging from 24 hours to 7 days. If your treatment plan involves a continuous infusion, you will have a Venous Access Device (port) placed prior to starting treatment.

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

<b>Possible Side Effects:</b>	<b>What to do:</b>
<b>Increased risk for infection due to decreased blood counts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid contact with people who have infections, colds or flu.</li> <li>• Wash your hands often.</li> <li>• Report chills or a fever of 100.4° or higher to your doctor right away, day or night.</li> <li>• Report any signs or symptoms of infection, such as cough, burning with urination, skin redness or sores.</li> <li>• Call your doctor before taking any medicine for a fever or chills.</li> </ul>
<b>Increased risk for bleeding due to decreased blood counts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report signs of bleeding or bruising.</li> <li>• Avoid taking aspirin or aspirin products unless your doctor tells you to take it.</li> <li>• Use soft toothbrush.</li> <li>• Use electric razor.</li> <li>• Talk to your doctor before any scheduled medical or dental procedures.</li> </ul>
<b>Lower than normal red blood cells</b> Anemia	Call you doctor if you have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ shortness of breath with activity</li> <li>○ fatigue</li> <li>○ dizziness</li> <li>○ fast heartbeat or a heartbeat that does not feel normal</li> <li>○ headache</li> </ul>
<b>Increased risk for sunburn</b>  <b>Sensitive to Light</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid the sun, sunlamps and tanning beds.</li> <li>• Use sunscreen when outside.</li> <li>• Wear a hat when outside.</li> <li>• Wear long sleeves and pants to block the sun.</li> <li>• Wear eyewear that protects your eyes from the sun.</li> </ul>
<b>Diarrhea</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep well hydrated with water or fluids.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Call your doctor if you have:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ More than 4 loose stools in 24 hours</li> <li>○ A fever of 100.4° or higher</li> <li>○ bad stomach pain or cramps</li> <li>○ dizziness or feel faint</li> <li>○ bloody stools (dark, tarry or sticky)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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<b>Possible Side Effects:</b>	<b>What to do:</b>
<b>Stomatitis</b> 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"> <li>● Let your nurse or doctor know if you have sores in your mouth.</li> <li>● Avoid spicy, hot or cold foods.</li> <li>● Avoid using tobacco products, alcohol and mouthwash that contain alcohol.</li> <li>● 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.</li> <li>● Use a soft toothbrush.</li> <li>● Your doctor may prescribe a special mouthwash for you to use.</li> </ul>
<b>Coumadin (Warfarin) dosing</b>	If you are taking Coumadin (warfarin), talk with your doctor. You may need to have your blood work checked more closely while you are taking it with this medicine.
<b>Taste changes</b>  <b>Metal taste in mouth</b>	While on treatment, foods you usually enjoy may taste bland, different, or bad. Call your doctor or nurse if you have taste changes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Try cold or frozen foods as they may taste better than hot foods</li> <li>○ Flavor your food with herbs, seasonings, sugar or sauces</li> <li>○ Keep a clean and healthy mouth; brush your teeth before and after each meal.</li> <li>○ Use plastic utensils if food tastes like metal.</li> <li>○ Eat mints, chew gum or chew ice to mask the bitter or metal taste.</li> <li>○ Avoid cigarette smoking.</li> </ul>
<b>Watery eyes</b>	There is no treatment for watery eyes.
<b>Nausea/vomiting</b> <b>Decreased appetite</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Take nausea medicine as instructed. Let your doctor know if it is not working for you.</li> <li>● Eat smaller, frequent meals.</li> <li>● Try liquid nutrition supplements (Boost, Ensure)</li> <li>● A dietitian is available to talk with you.</li> </ul>
<b>Fluorouracil will be in urine and stool for 48 hours.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Caregivers will need to handle soiled linens and clothing wearing gloves or using a bag as a barrier.</li> <li>● Keep your soiled items separate from others' dirty laundry and wash right away.</li> <li>● Women who are pregnant should not handle your soiled clothing or linens.</li> <li>● Wash any skin that body waste has touched with soap and water.</li> <li>● You may use the same toilet that you normally use.</li> <li>● If the toilet or toilet seat becomes dirty with urine, stool or vomit, clean the surfaces before other people use the toilet</li> <li>● Wash hands with soap and water after using the toilet.</li> <li>● <b>It is safe to hug and kiss.</b></li> </ul>

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<b>Possible Side Effects:</b>	<b>What to do:</b>
<b>Avoid pregnancy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Use birth control that you can trust to prevent pregnancy while taking this drug and for <b>6</b> months after stopping this drug.</li> <li>• If you or your sex partner gets pregnant, while taking this drug or within <b>6</b> months after stopping this drug, call your doctor right away.</li> <li>• May cause fertility problems.</li> </ul>

<b>Less common side effects that may happen</b>	<b>What to do:</b>
<b>Fluorouracil can affect your heart muscle.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call your doctor if you have:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ fast heartbeat or a heartbeat that does not feel normal</li> <li>○ any shortness of breath or chest discomfort</li> <li>○ increased or unexplained cough</li> <li>○ swelling in feet, ankles or leg</li> <li>○ sudden weight gain of more than 3 pounds in a day.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Neurologic problems</b> Encephalopathy or neurologic toxicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call your doctor right away if you have:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ change in mental status</li> <li>○ confusion or disorientation</li> <li>○ loss of balance</li> <li>○ difficulty walking or change in how you walk</li> <li>○ passed out</li> <li>○ coma</li> <li>○ seizures</li> <li>○ speech problems like slurred speech</li> <li>○ abnormal eye movements</li> <li>○ Avoid driving, doing hazardous work or activities, or operating heavy or dangerous machinery during treatment.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Hand and Foot Syndrome</b> tenderness and redness of palms and bottom of feet where skin becomes dry and peels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply moisturizing lotion often.</li> <li>• Avoid using hot water or standing for long times.</li> <li>• Wear gloves and comfortable shoes to prevent injuries.</li> <li>• Call your doctor if you have:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ redness, swelling, peeling, or tenderness of hands or feet</li> <li>○ any skin redness, itching, rash or blisters that ooze or peel</li> <li>○ tingling/burning or your skin is sensitive to touch</li> <li>○ a hard time walking or using your hands</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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<b><u>Possible Side Effects:</u></b>	<b><u>What to do:</u></b>
<b>Nail changes/toxicity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Darkening and ridging of fingernails may happen. It will go away when the treatment is finished.</li> <li>• Your nails and cuticles may become red, sore, swollen, and brittle.</li> <li>• Your nails may separate from the nail bed and your nail may fall off.</li> <li>• Call your doctor if you have:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ redness, swelling, peeling, or tenderness around nails of hands or feet</li> <li>○ any skin redness, itching, or rash</li> <li>○ draining fluid from your nail</li> <li>○ a hard time walking or using your hands</li> <li>○ chills or a fever of 100.4° F or higher</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Take care of your nails:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Keep nails trimmed and clean</li> <li>○ Do not cut nails too short</li> <li>○ Do not bite, pick or tear at your nails or cuticles</li> <li>○ Do not cut your cuticles</li> <li>○ Apply moisturizing lotion often</li> <li>○ Avoid using hot water</li> <li>○ Avoid standing for long times</li> <li>○ Wear gloves to wash dishes</li> <li>○ Wear comfortable shoes with soft cotton socks to prevent injuries</li> <li>○ Do not use artificial nails</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor.</p>	