



## Rituximab (Rituxan®)

Generic Name: rituximab

Drug Name: Rituxan®

Purpose: Rituximab is an anti-CD20 monoclonal antibody used to:

- treat certain kinds of lymphoma (cancer of the lymph nodes) and leukemia (cancer of the blood or bone marrow). Rituximab works by attacking a certain substance (CD20 antigen) on your cells causing the cells to die.
- treat various autoimmune diseases including rheumatoid arthritis (RA), multiple sclerosis (MS), idiopathic or immune thrombocytopenic purpura (ITP).
- help lessen organ rejection caused by antibodies in transplant patients.

How drug is given:

- Intravenous (IV) into a vein by a specially trained nurse at the hospital or Cancer Center.

Possible Side effects:

- **Tell your nurse right away if you experience any of the following while receiving rituximab:**
  - Fever and chills
  - Headache
  - Dizziness or feeling faint
  - Weakness
  - Feeling that your tongue or throat is swollen
  - Skin reactions:
    - flushing (redness)
    - itching
    - hives
    - rash
  - Difficulty breathing or sudden cough
  - Heart palpitations or chest pain
  - Nausea or vomiting
  - Pain at site of the lymphoma
- Flu-like symptoms up to 24 hours after your treatment such as:
  - body aches
  - fever of 100.4°F or higher
  - feeling very tired
  - cold symptoms (runny nose, sore throat, cough)
  - earache or headache

Medications are available to help these symptoms.



**Important:**

1. Talk about contraception (birth control) and/or family planning with your doctor while taking rituximab.
2. DO NOT breastfeed while taking rituximab.
3. Your doctor's office will check your blood counts regularly.
4. Tell your healthcare provider if you:
  - have had reactions to rituximab in the past.
  - have a history of heart problems, an irregular heartbeat or chest pain.
  - have an infection including a cold, the flu, hepatitis B or C (active infection), herpes (active outbreak), chickenpox or shingles, west nile virus.
  - had recent vaccinations (shots) or are scheduled to receive any vaccinations (shots).