

Common chemotherapy drugs

The most common chemotherapy drugs and their side effects are listed in these tables. Your child may be prescribed additional drugs – information about these can be recorded in the final table for your reference.

Drug	Common side effects	Possible longer-term side effects	Drugs my child may receive
Actinomycin D	Low resistance to infection, anaemia and bleeding or bruising, hair loss, nausea and vomiting, tiredness, occasional liver damage		
Asparaginase	Allergic reaction, local skin reaction, tiredness, pancreatitis		
ATRA (All-Trans-Retinoic-Acid or Tretinoin)	Headaches, dry skin and mouth, nausea, bone pain, dry eyes		
Bevacizumab (Avastin)	Allergic reaction, taste changes, sore mouth, dry mouth, increased thirst, indigestion, loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting, constipation or diarrhoea, dry skin, hair loss, dizziness, headache, high blood pressure, muscle pain, stuffy/runny nose, nosebleeds, tiredness, voice changes, slow wound healing, osteonecrosis	Damage to kidneys and heart	
Bleomycin	High temperature, hair loss, nausea and tiredness, breathlessness, sore mouth and skin	Lung damage	
Busulphan	Low resistance to infection, anaemia and bleeding or bruising, nausea and vomiting, mouth ulcers, diarrhoea, hair loss, skin discolouration, changes in liver function, changes to the lung, seizures	Risk of reduced fertility	
Carboplatin	Allergic reaction, low resistance to infection, anaemia and bleeding or bruising, tiredness, nausea and vomiting	Kidney damage	
Chlorambucil	Low resistance to infection, anaemia and bleeding or bruising, tiredness	Risk of reduced fertility	

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Cisplatin	Low resistance to infection, anaemia and bleeding or bruising, nausea and vomiting, changes in kidney function, hearing changes, taste changes	Damage to kidneys and hearing	
Cyclophosphamide	Low resistance to infection, anaemia and bleeding or bruising, hair loss, tiredness, bladder irritation, nausea and vomiting		
Cytosine arabinoside (Ara-C or Cytarabine)	Low resistance to infection, anaemia and bleeding or bruising, hair loss, diarrhoea, tiredness, nausea and vomiting, abdominal cramps, fever/flu-like symptoms, rash, sore eyes		
Dacarbazine	Low resistance to infection, anaemia and bleeding or bruising, nausea and vomiting, fever/flu-like symptoms, changes in liver function, skin sensitivity to sunlight.		
Daunorubicin, Doxorubicin (Adriamycin) and Epirubicin	Low resistance to infection, anaemia and bleeding or bruising, hair loss, tiredness, nausea, sore mouth and gut, red urine	Weakening of heart muscle	
Dexamethasone and Prednisolone (steroids)	Increased appetite and weight gain, rounded face, risk of infection, raised blood sugar, risk of temporarily induced diabetes, change in behaviour – tearful/emotional, avascular necrosis	Loss of bone density, obesity	
Etoposide	Allergic reaction, low resistance to infection, anaemia and bleeding or bruising, hair loss, tiredness, nausea and vomiting, low blood pressure during infusion		
Gemtuzumab (Mylotarg)	Allergic reaction, low resistance to infection, anaemia and bleeding or bruising, nausea and vomiting, sore mouth, high or low blood pressure during infusion, flu like symptoms, changes in the liver	Risk of reduced fertility	
Ifosfamide	Low resistance to infection, anaemia and bleeding or bruising, hair loss, tiredness, bladder irritation, nausea and vomiting		
Irinotecan	Increased sweating, saliva production, stomach cramps, diarrhoea, nausea and vomiting, loss of appetite, increased risk of bruising, low resistance to infection, hair loss, tiredness, sore mouth, taste changes, muscle cramps, rash	Risk of reduced fertility	

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Isotretinoin	Dry skin, dry eyes, headache, visual disturbances, anxiety		
Melphalan	Allergic reaction, low resistance to infection, anaemia and bleeding or bruising, hair loss, nausea and vomiting, sore mouth, changes in kidney and liver function, changes to the lung tissue	Risk of reduced fertility	
Mercaptopurine	Low resistance to infection, anaemia and bleeding or bruising, tiredness, skin rashes		
Methotrexate	Low resistance to infection, anaemia and bleeding or bruising, tiredness, diarrhoea, mouth ulcers, nausea and vomiting, skin sensitivity to sunlight. Incidences of inflammation of the brain have been reported with intrathecal methotrexate		
Mitoxantrone	Low resistance to infection, nausea and vomiting, sore mouth and gut, blue/green urine	Weakening of heart muscle	
Procarbazine	Low resistance to infection, anaemia and bleeding or bruising, tiredness, nausea and vomiting, rash	Risk of reduced fertility	
Rituximab	Allergic reaction, low resistance to infection, anaemia and bleeding or bruising, tiredness, diarrhoea, flu like symptoms, nausea and vomiting	Risk of reduced fertility	
Temozolamide	Low resistance to infection, anaemia and bleeding or bruising, tiredness, hair loss, constipation, anorexia		
Topotecan	Low resistance to infection, anaemia and bleeding or bruising, sore mouth, nausea and vomiting, hair loss, tiredness, taste changes, diarrhoea		
Thioguanine	Low resistance to infection, anaemia and bleeding or bruising, tiredness		
Vincristine and Vinblastine	Constipation, hair loss, pain in the jaw, tingling fingers and weak ankles, foot drop		

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