Leucovorin (Calcium Leucovorin, Citrovorum Factor, Folinic Acid)

Pronounced: loo-koe-VOR-in
Classification: Folic Acid Analog

About Leucovorin (Calcium Leucovorin, Citrovorum Factor, Folinic Acid)

Leucovorin is not a chemotherapy medication, but is given in conjunction with chemotherapy. Leucovorin can be used with the chemotherapy medication fluorouracil (5-FU). In this case, it is used to enhance the effects of the fluorouracil, in other words, to make the drug work better.

Leucovorin is also given with a chemotherapy agent called methotrexate, but in this case it is given to "rescue" normal, healthy cells from the damage caused by the methotrexate. In order to give the methotrexate time to kill the cancer cells, leucovorin is started 12-24 hours after the methotrexate is given.

How to Take Leucovorin

This medication can be given in an intravenous (IV) or oral form (by mouth). The dosage is based on the particular protocol being used by the doctor. You should not take supplemental folic acid while receiving leucovorin, as this may enhance the effect to an undesirable degree.

If you are taking the oral form of leucovorin, it is important to make sure you are taking the correct amount of medication every time. Before every dose, check that what you are taking matches what you have been prescribed.

Storage and Handling

Store the oral form of this medication at room temperature in the original container. If you prefer to use a pillbox, discuss this with your oncology pharmacist. Ask your oncology team where to return any unused medication for disposal. Do not flush down the toilet or throw in the trash.

Where do I get this medication?

The oral formulation of this medication is available through a retail or mail order pharmacy. Your oncology team will work with your prescription drug plan to identify an in-network pharmacy for medication distribution.

Insurance Information

This medication may be covered under your prescription drug plan. Co-pay assistance from private third-party foundations may be available. Your care team can help you access these resources, if they are available.

Possible Side Effects of Leucovorin

Leucovorin rarely has side effects. Any side effects experienced are generally associated with the chemotherapy that is given with the leucovorin, rather than the leucovorin itself. In the case of fluorouracil, leucovorin may make the side effects of that medication worse. When used with methotrexate, it helps to lessen the severity of side effects. In rare cases, rash, hives, itching, and wheezing have been reported with leucovorin.
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