



Palifermin (Kepivance®)

Pronounce: pal-ee-FER-min

Classification: Keratinocyte Growth Factor

About Palifermin (Kepivance®)

Palifermin is a man-made version of a protein, naturally produced by the body, called keratinocyte growth factor (KGF). KGF stimulates the growth of tissues such as: skin and the lining of the mouth, stomach, and intestines. KGF also assists in the repair of the skin and gastrointestinal lining by stimulating cells to grow and develop. Palifermin, like the body's own KGF, is also able to stimulate these cells to grow and develop.

Mucositis is inflammation of the lining of the mouth and gastrointestinal tract (throat, stomach, and intestines), frequently seen in patients undergoing bone marrow or stem cell transplant. Severe mucositis often includes sores and ulcers in the mouth and GI tract, making it difficult or impossible to eat, drink, talk, or swallow. Palifermin is used to decrease the chance of developing severe mucositis or to shorten the duration of severe mucositis in cancer patients receiving chemotherapy and radiation therapy, and undergoing autologous or allogeneic transplant.

Palifermin is **not** a cancer treatment, but a supportive care medicine. This means it is used to counteract the effects of cancer and its treatments.

How to Take Palifermin

Palifermin is given as an intravenous (IV, into a vein) infusion before starting chemotherapy/radiation therapy, and after completion of chemotherapy. Palifermin should not be given on the same day as chemotherapy or radiation therapy.

This medication can interact with heparin. Your healthcare provider should rinse the intravenous line with saline prior to and after palifermin administration.

Possible Side Effects of Palifermin

There are a number of things you can do to manage the side effects of palifermin. Talk to your care team about these recommendations. They can help you decide what will work best for you. These are some of the most common or important side effects:

Rash

Some patients may develop a rash, red, dry, or itchy skin. Use an alcohol-free moisturizer on your skin and lips; avoid moisturizers with perfumes or scents. Your doctor or nurse can recommend a topical medication if itching is bothersome. If your skin does crack or bleed, be sure to keep the area clean to avoid infection. Be sure to notify your healthcare provider of any rash that develops, as this can be a reaction. They can give you more tips on [caring for your skin](#).

Pancreas Problems

Bloating, indigestion, fatty stools, loss of appetite, sweating, abdominal pain, and weight loss can all be symptoms of pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas). Notify your care provider if you have any of these

symptoms.

Fever

Fever can be a side effect of this medication. Contact your care provider for a temperature of 100.4°F or 38°C or greater.

Peripheral Edema

Peripheral edema is swelling of the extremities caused by the retention of fluid. It can cause swelling of the hands, arms, legs, ankles, and feet. The swelling can become uncomfortable. Notify your oncology care team if you are experiencing any new or worsening swelling.

Reproductive Concerns

Exposure of an unborn child to this medication could cause birth defects, so you should not become pregnant or father a child while on this medication. Effective birth control is necessary during treatment. Even if your menstrual cycle stops or you believe you are not producing sperm, you could still be fertile and conceive. You should not breastfeed while receiving this medication or for 2 weeks after your last dose.

OncoLink is designed for educational purposes only and is not engaged in rendering medical advice or professional services. The information provided through OncoLink should not be used for diagnosing or treating a health problem or a disease. It is not a substitute for professional care. If you have or suspect you may have a health problem or have questions or concerns about the medication that you have been prescribed, you should consult your health care provider.