

# Lomustine

CCNU, and Ceenu are other names for this medication.

## How Is This Medication Useful?

CCNU is used in animals to treat cancers of the brain and spinal cord, mast cell tumors and as a “rescue” drug for lymphosarcoma. A “rescue drug” is used when other drugs are no longer working.

## Are There Conditions or Times When Its Use Might Cause Problems?

CCNU can rarely cause lung problems and should be used with caution in animals with lung disease.

CCNU can have pronounced effects in animals with kidney disease, because CCNU is eliminated from the body by the kidneys. The dose may need to be reduced in animals with kidney disease.

If your animal has any of the above conditions, talk to your veterinarian about the potential risks of using the medication versus the benefits that it might have.

## What Side Effects Can Be Seen With Its Use?

Like many chemotherapy drugs, CCNU decreases the ability of the bone marrow to produce blood cells which may result in anemias and increased risk for infection. If your pet shows signs of lack of energy, weakness, infection, bruising or bleeding you should contact your veterinarian immediately.

CCNU may cause stomach upset and can be given with food to reduce this side effect. If necessary, give the anti-nausea or diarrhea pills you have, as needed, and call your vet to let them know you have used these drugs.

Pets who have received previous chemotherapy or radiotherapy can have increased sensitivity to CCNU.

CCNU may occasionally cause inflammation in the mouth (called stomatitis). If you notice any pain or discomfort on eating or drinking, or any redness or rawness in the mouth, contact your veterinarian immediately.

CCNU, like several other chemotherapy drugs, can occasionally cause hair loss.

CCNU can sometimes cause soreness in the eyes (corneal de-epithelialization, or ulcers). If you notice any squinting, reluctance to open the eyes in bright light, redness in the eyes, or cloudiness in the surface of the eye, contact your veterinarian immediately.

CCNU has caused birth defects in lab animals, so it should not be handled by people who are pregnant or nursing. CCNU and its metabolites have been detected in breast milk, so nursing puppies or kittens should receive milk replacer when the mother dog or cat is receiving CCNU. Like many chemotherapy drugs, CCNU should not be used in pregnant or nursing dogs or cats, or in male pets to be used for breeding.

CCNU can rarely cause toxicity to the kidneys and/or the liver. While your pet is taking CCNU, we will check liver and kidney values in the blood every 3 months or so. If elevations in these values are seen over time, we may stop giving CCNU. Milk Thistle and/or SAME supplements may help to mediate liver toxicity.

CCNU has a prolonged effect in the body, so any of the above side effects can be seen as long as 1-6 weeks or more after treatment.

### **How Should It Be Given?**

Because allergic reaction can rarely occur in response to CCNU, it is given in the clinic so your pet can be observed for at least 30 minutes after the pills are given. An antihistamine is usually given 30 minutes prior to giving the CCNU pills.

Dogs and cats usually get this drug by mouth every 2-4 weeks, depending on the dose and how your pet handles the drug.

### **What Other Information Is Important About This Medication?**

Some other drugs can interact with this medication so tell your veterinarian about any drugs or foods that you currently give your animal. CCNU should be used with caution with other drugs that might suppress the bone marrow. Do not give new foods or medications without first asking your veterinarian. Modified Live vaccines should never be given to any animal on cancer chemotherapy.

CCNU is eliminated primarily in the urine. Any urine from this animal should be cleaned up with gloves for at least 48 hours after the last treatment. Waste should be disposed of in a sealed plastic bag.