

Mustargen

other names for this medication: mechlorethamine HCl, nitrogen mustard, mustine, HN₂

How Is This Medication Useful?

Mustargen is used to treat lymphoma in pets, as well as fluid accumulation due to cancer in the chest and abdomen.

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

Mustargen can elevate uric acid (urate) levels in the body. This can cause problems in dogs who have gout, or form urate stones in the urinary tract. This is a problem especially in Dalmatian dogs. If your dog takes allopurinol or other medications for problems with high uric acid levels, those drug doses may need to be increased. Dalmatians who take mustargen may need to be treated with allopurinol.

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, mustargen decreases the ability of the bone marrow to produce blood cells that may result in anemias, increased risk for infection, or bleeding/bruising. If your pet shows signs of lack of energy, weakness, infection, bruising or bleeding you should contact your veterinarian immediately.

Mustargen may cause loss of appetite, stomach upset, or diarrhea. 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.

When injected into the chest or abdomen to control fluid accumulation due to cancer, mustargen can sometimes cause loss of hearing.

Mustargen can sometimes cause liver toxicity. To monitor for this, we will monitor liver enzymes in your pet by doing bloodwork every 2-3 months, as long as your pet is taking chemotherapy. If there are indications of liver toxicity, we may need to stop giving mustargen.

Mustargen can occasionally cause a problem called "peripheral neuropathy." This can result in weakness in the lower limbs, constipation, or other problems.

Mustargen can occasionally cause ulcers or bleeding in the stomach or intestines. If you note any vomiting (especially with blood or digested blood which might look like coffee grounds), or any diarrhea with blood, please let your veterinarian know as soon as possible. Stomach ulcers might also cause decrease in appetite, which should also be reported to your veterinarian.

While it is unknown whether mustargen enters maternal milk, nursing puppies or kittens should receive milk replacer when the bitch or queen is receiving mechlorethamine.

Mustargen is inactivated by the body very shortly after it is injected. However, side effects may occur up to one week after administration.

Like many chemotherapy drugs, mustargen should not be used in pregnant or nursing dogs or cats, or in male pets to be used for breeding.

How Should It Be Given?

Dogs and cats usually get this drug once a week for two weeks in a row, then off for two weeks. Chemotherapy schedule may be adjusted, depending on the dose and how your pet handles the drug.

Mustargen is given in at a veterinary clinic, after placement of an intravenous catheter. The powdered drug is reconstituted just prior to giving it, and then given slowly over 10 minutes. Your pet will then usually be observed for at least an hour or so after chemotherapy administration, prior to being sent home. It is very important that procarbazine be administered into a vein. If any of the drug leaks out, it can cause tissue damage. We will take every precaution possible to keep this from happening. If any redness, swelling or sores develop around the injection site, it is very important that you notify your veterinarian as soon as possible.

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. Mustargen 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. Modified Live vaccines should never be given to cancer patients taken chemotherapy.