

Natulan

What is Natulan?

Natulan is a medicine prescribed by doctors to treat certain serious disorders of the lymphatic system, particularly Hodgkin's disease and Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Natulan capsules contain procarbazine hydrochloride equivalent to 50 mg procarbazine per capsule. Packaging: brown glass bottle containing 50 capsules of 50 mg each. The capsules also contain the following ingredients: mannitol, maize starch, talcum powder, yellow ferric oxide (E 172), titanium dioxide (E 171) and gelatin.

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Natulan is recorded in the medicine's register under RVG 05077.

When is Natulan prescribed?

Natulan is used in combination chemotherapy for the treatment of Hodgkin's disease and Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma (disorders of the lymphatic system). Natulan can also, as part of a combination therapy, be used for the treatment of brain tumours.

When may Natulan not be used?

Natulan may not under any circumstances be used during pregnancy.

Natulan is not prescribed for people with serious liver or kidney disorders nor for people who appear to have had blood abnormalities before treatment with Natulan (serious deficiency of white blood cells and platelets).

If allergic skin reactions occur treatment should be stopped.

You should not use Natulan if you are allergic or hypersensitive to one of the substances contained in the capsules.

Before using Natulan.

Before starting treatment you should make sure that your doctor knows if you:

- have a liver and/or a kidney disorder
- are pregnant, or think that you are pregnant or intend becoming pregnant
- have a blood abnormality
- use alcohol regularly
- have any other illnesses
- suffer from allergies
- use other medicines

Male patients are advised to have their sperm deep-frozen if applicable.

Before opening the bottle of Natulan capsules, check whether they are damaged (you will see loose powder in the bottle). If this is the case, you should return the bottle with the capsules, preferably unopened, to the doctor treating you or to the pharmacist who supplied the bottle.

Can Natulan be used during pregnancy and when breastfeeding?

Natulan may not under any circumstances be used during pregnancy. Women of reproductive age should use a reliable method of contraception during treatment with Natulan.

Before treatment starts you should inform your doctor if you are pregnant, or think that you are pregnant or intend becoming pregnant.

It is not known whether Natulan is secreted in breast milk. Do not use Natulan if you are breast-feeding your child.

Which other substances can interact with Natulan?

Before starting treatment you should inform the doctor if you are using any other medicines (including medicines available without a prescription). This is very important, because taking two or more medicines at the same time can increase or decrease the effects of the medicines concerned. You should therefore not take Natulan with other medicines unless you have informed your doctor about it and have received his permission.

Using Natulan with certain medicines for the nervous system can cause the effects of these medicines to be increased.

Patients taking Natulan may become unable to tolerate alcohol; for this reason you may not use alcohol during treatment with Natulan.

In rare cases eating cheese during treatment with Natulan and other similar medicines can cause an increase in blood pressure. Although this has never been reported during Natulan use, you are advised not to eat any cheese during the period of treatment as a precautionary measure.

How is Natulan used?

Treatment with Natulan should be carried out under strict medical supervision. Always use Natulan in the way prescribed by your doctor. He/she will prescribe a suitable dose for you. Do not change the dose prescribed on your own initiative; it is extremely important that you follow your doctor's instructions with regard to the prescribed dose very closely.

You should swallow the capsules without chewing, washed down with some water or fruit juice, while standing or sitting.

Usually the doctor treating you will choose to use a combination of Natulan with similar medicines or radiotherapy.

In some people Natulan has an inhibitory effect on the production of certain blood cells (white blood cells and platelets), which is why your doctor will monitor your blood status. If the number of blood cells has decreased, treatment will be stopped temporarily and postponed until the blood status recovers.

If you think that the effect of the medicine is too weak or too strong, you should discuss this with your doctor.

If you, or someone else, have taken an overdose of Natulan you should contact your doctor, pharmacist or the nearest hospital immediately.

What side-effects or other problems can occur with Natulan use?

Side-effects can occur during treatment with Natulan. Gastrointestinal disorders and an adverse effect on blood-cell production in the bone marrow particularly have been reported in connection with use of Natulan. Your blood will be monitored regularly to prevent the latter effect. Lack of appetite and nausea often occur as side-effects.

In exceptional cases allergic reactions can occur, such as skin reactions (red skin, hives, itch).

Hair loss can occur occasionally, but in most cases it is only temporary.

Effects on the nervous system have also been described, especially headache, tingling in the fingers and movement disorders. There are also reports of depression, sleep disturbances, delusions and psychosis.

Allergic reactions, including pneumonia, can occur. Leukaemia has also been reported when Natulan has been used in combination with other chemotherapy, with or without radiotherapy.

Natulan is known to affect fertility. Male patients are therefore advised to have their sperm deep-frozen if applicable.

If you are concerned about these or other unexpected reactions or symptoms, you should discuss your concerns with your doctor or pharmacist.

How you should store Natulan

Natulan should be stored at a temperature between 15 and 25 °C in a dry, dark place.

Natulan should not be used after the expiry date given on the packaging after the statement 'Do not use after...' or 'exp.'. After this date it cannot be guaranteed that Natulan will have the expected effect. It should be replaced by a more recently manufactured package.

Store Natulan in its packaging out of sight and reach of children together with other medicines. If the Natulan capsules are damaged you should return the bottle with the capsules, preferably unopened, to the doctor treating you or to the pharmacist who supplied the bottle.

Natulan has been prescribed for you personally and you should not give it to anyone else under any circumstances.

Do not forget to return unused medicines to your pharmacist, who will see that they are disposed of in an environmentally responsible way.

General tips

Before you take Natulan, you should first make sure that you have picked up the correct package (from your medicine cupboard, for example) and that the correct capsules are in the box. If your eyesight is poor, get other people to help you with this. Never remove medicines from their containers in the dark or in poor lighting.

It is important that you read the patient information leaflet each time before using a new container because it contains information that may have been changed to take account of new findings or opinions. The patient information leaflet may therefore contain information that is important for you. The doctor who has prescribed Natulan for you and the pharmacist who has supplied it are kept up to date with the properties of and changes to this medicine. If you are uncertain about how to use Natulan, you should contact your doctor or pharmacist.

It is a good idea if the people around you also know which medicines you are using. For this reason you should keep this information somewhere they can get at it.

Always take enough medicine with you if you are going on a journey. If you are leaving the country it is advisable that you take a written statement from your doctor with you about your medicines usage that you can show if asked at borders or abroad.