Rituximab (ri TUK si mab)
Patient Education

US Brand Names: Rituxan
Therapeutic Category: monoclonal antibody, targeted therapy

What is this medicine used for?
Used to treat cancer. More specifically this particular drug is used to treat CD20 positive, B-cell non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

How does it work?
Monoclonal antibodies (MoAbs) such as Rituximab react with certain markers on the surface of a cell in your body. This medicine is made to target a marker (CD20) on B cells.

What should my doctor or nurse know before I take this medication?

- If you have had hepatitis or been exposed to hepatitis.
- If you have received monoclonal antibody therapy in the past.
- If you have had a blood transfusion.
- If you are allergic to any medicines.
- If you are taking other over the counter or prescription medicines, including vitamins and herbal remedies.
- If you are, or may be pregnant.
- If you are breast feeding.

How is this drug given?

- This medicine can be used alone or in combination with other cancer medicine.
- This medicine is given into a vein.

What are the general precautions when taking this medicine?

- **DO NOT TAKE YOUR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) MEDICATION BEFORE RECEIVING RITUXAN.**
- Talk with your doctor or nurse before taking over the counter or prescription medications, including vitamins and herbal remedies.
- Drink 8 to 10 glasses of non-caffeinated liquid every day (unless told otherwise by your doctor or nurse).
- If you or your partner can get pregnant, use birth control during your treatment. Once completing treatment, discuss the timing for discontinuing birth control measures with your provider. (See Patient Teaching Sheet: Fertility)
What are the common side effects of this medicine?

- Severe infusion related reactions have been reported. This reaction is almost always seen with the first infusion. Symptoms can include; itching, chills, fever, shortness of breath and blood pressure changes. You will receive pre-medications to reduce your risk of infusion reaction.
- Skin rash (i.e. hives).
- Though not a common occurrence, you may feel discomfort at the site of your cancer.

Danger signals to report immediately to your doctor or nurse:

- Signs or symptoms of infection. This include a fever of 100.4 °F (38 °C) or greater, chills, severe sore throat, ear or sinus pain, cough, increased sputum or change in color, painful urination, mouth sores, wound that will not heal, or anal itching or pain.
- Feeling extremely tired, weak dizzy or light headed.
- Go to your nearest emergency room for signs of a life-threatening reaction: wheezing, chest tightness, fever, itching, bad cough, blue skin color, seizures, or swelling of face, lips, tongue or throat.

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