

# Rituximab

**Care Team Contact Information:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Pharmacy Contact Information:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Diagnosis:** \_\_\_\_\_

- This treatment is used for many types of cancer and non-cancer disorders.

**Goal of Treatment:** \_\_\_\_\_

- Treatment may continue for a certain time period, until it no longer works, or until side effects are no longer controlled.

## Treatment Regimen

| Treatment Name                                                                   | How the Treatment Works                                                                                | How the Treatment is Given  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Rituximab (rih-TUK-sih-mab):<br>Rituxan (rih-TUK-sun), Riabni, Ruxience, Truxima | Helps your immune system find and attack cancer cells by targeting a specific protein on their surface | Infusion given into a vein. |

**Treatment Administration and Schedule:** Rituximab is frequently given with other treatments. Talk with your care team about your treatment schedule.

**Appointments:** Appointments may include regular check-ups with your care team, treatment appointments, lab visits, and imaging tests. It's important to keep your appointments whenever you can. If you miss any appointments, call your care provider as soon as possible to reschedule your appointment.

## Supportive Care to Prevent and Treat Side Effects

| Description                                | Supportive Care Given at the Clinic or Hospital | Supportive Care Taken at Home |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| To help prevent infusion-related reactions | _____<br>_____<br>_____                         | _____<br>_____<br>_____       |
| Other                                      | _____<br>_____<br>_____                         | _____<br>_____<br>_____       |

## Common Side Effects

| Side Effect                                                      | Important Information                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Infusion Reactions (Boxed Warning)</b>                        | <p>Description: Infusion reactions are common with rituximab and can sometimes be severe or life-threatening.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your care team may prescribe medicines before each infusion of rituximab to help decrease your risk for infusion reactions or to help make any infusion reaction less severe.</li> <li>You may be monitored for infusion reactions during each infusion of rituximab.</li> <li>Your care team may slow down or stop your infusion or completely stop treatment with rituximab if you have an infusion reaction.</li> </ul> <p>Get medical help right away if you develop any of the following symptoms of infusion reaction during or after an infusion of rituximab:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chills or shaking</li> <li>Itching, rash, or flushing</li> <li>Trouble breathing or wheezing; tongue swelling</li> <li>Dizziness or feeling faint</li> <li>Fever of 100.4°F (or 38°C) or higher</li> <li>Pain in your back or neck</li> </ul>                                |
| Low White Blood Cell (WBC) Count and Increased Risk of Infection | <p>Description: WBCs help protect the body against infections. If you have a low WBC count, you may be at a higher risk of infection.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wash your hands and bathe regularly.</li> <li>Avoid crowded places.</li> <li>Stay away from people who are sick.</li> <li>Your care team may prescribe a drug that promotes the growth of WBCs.</li> </ul> <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fever of 100.4 °F (38°C) or higher</li> <li>Chills</li> <li>Cough</li> <li>Sore throat</li> <li>Painful urination</li> <li>Tiredness that is worse than normal</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Low Red Blood Cell (RBC) Count and Hemoglobin (Hgb)              | <p>Description: RBCs and Hgb help bring oxygen to your body's tissues and take away carbon dioxide. If you have low RBC counts or Hgb, you may feel weak, tired, or look pale.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night.</li> <li>Avoid operating heavy machinery when tired.</li> <li>Balance work and rest, staying active but resting when needed.</li> </ul> <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shortness of breath</li> <li>Dizziness</li> <li>Fast or abnormal heartbeats</li> <li>Severe headache</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Fatigue                                                          | <p>Description: Fatigue is a constant and sometimes strong feeling of tiredness.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Routine exercise has been shown to decrease levels of fatigue. Work with your care team to find the right type of exercise for you.</li> <li>Ask your family and friends for help with daily tasks and emotional support.</li> <li>Try healthy ways to feel better, like meditation, writing in a journal, doing yoga, and using guided imagery to lower anxiety and feel good.</li> <li>Make a regular sleep schedule and limit naps during the day so you can sleep better at night, aiming for 7 to 8 hours of sleep.</li> <li>Don't use heavy machines or do things that need your full attention if you're very tired to avoid accidents.</li> </ul> <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tiredness that affects your daily life</li> <li>Tiredness all the time, and it doesn't get better with rest</li> <li>Dizziness and weakness, along with being tired</li> </ul> |

### Select Rare or Serious Side Effects

| Side Effect                                                             | Talk to Your Care Team if You Have Any of These Signs or Symptoms                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Severe Skin and Mouth Reactions (Boxed Warning)</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Painful sores or ulcers on your skin, lips, or in your mouth</li> <li>Blisters</li> <li>Peeling skin</li> <li>Rash</li> <li>Pustules</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                     |
| <b>Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) Reactivation (Boxed Warning)</b>             | <p>Before you start treatment, your care team will do blood tests to check for HBV infection. If you have had hepatitis B or are a carrier of hepatitis B virus, receiving rituximab could cause the virus to become an active infection again. Hepatitis B reactivation may cause serious liver problems, including liver failure and death. You should not receive rituximab if you have active hepatitis B liver disease. Your care team will monitor you for hepatitis B infection during and for several months after you stop receiving rituximab.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worsening tiredness</li> <li>Yellowing of your skin or white part of your eyes</li> </ul> |                                                                                                     |
| <b>Progressive Multifocal Leukoencephalopathy (PML) (Boxed Warning)</b> | <p>PML is a rare, serious brain infection caused by a virus that can happen in people who receive rituximab. People with weakened immune systems can get PML. PML can result in death or severe disability. There is no known treatment, prevention, or cure for PML.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confusion</li> <li>Dizziness or loss of balance</li> <li>Difficulty walking or talking</li> <li>Decreased strength or weakness on one side of your body</li> <li>Vision problems</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                     |
| <b>Tumor Lysis Syndrome (TLS)</b>                                       | <p>Tumor lysis happens when cancer cells break apart and flood your bloodstream with chemicals and toxins faster than your body can get rid of them. TLS is a group of conditions that affect your heart, kidneys, and muscles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher</li> <li>Chills</li> <li>Nausea</li> <li>Vomiting</li> <li>Confusion</li> <li>Shortness of breath</li> <li>Seizures</li> <li>Irregular heartbeat</li> <li>Dark or cloudy urine</li> <li>Unusual tiredness</li> <li>Muscle or joint pain</li> </ul>                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                     |
| <b>Heart Problems</b>                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chest pain</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Irregular heartbeats</li> </ul>                              |
| <b>Kidney Problems</b>                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decrease in your amount of urine</li> <li>Blood in your urine</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swelling of your ankles</li> <li>Loss of appetite</li> </ul> |
| <b>Stomach and Serious Bowel Problems</b>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Severe stomach-area (abdomen) pain</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repeated vomiting during treatment</li> </ul>                |

**Before starting treatment, ask your care team when to call 9-1-1 or seek emergency help.**  
**If you experience any new, worsening, or uncontrolled side effects, contact your care team immediately.**

### Intimacy, Pregnancy, and Breastfeeding

- Treatment may **change how you feel about intimacy and your body**. However, physical closeness—such as holding hands and hugging—remains safe. It is common to have questions about intimacy. If needed, talk to your care team for guidance.
- Treatment may **harm an unborn baby**.
  - If you are able to become pregnant, take a pregnancy test before starting treatment.
  - Use an effective method of birth control during treatment and for 12 months after your last dose.
  - If you think you might be pregnant or if you become pregnant, tell your care team right away.
  - If your partner(s) could become pregnant, use an effective method of birth control—such as condoms—during treatment.
- **Do NOT breastfeed** during treatment and for 6 months after your last dose.

### Additional Information

- **Tell your care team about all the medicines you take.**  
This includes prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, and herbal products. Before starting any new medicine, supplement, or vaccine, ask your care team first.
- **This Patient Education Sheet may not describe all possible side effects.**  
Call your healthcare provider for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

### Notes

Updated Date: October 31, 2025

Scan the QR code below to access this education sheet.



Important notice: The Association of Cancer Care Centers (ACCC), Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association (HOPA), Network for Collaborative Oncology Development & Advancement, Inc. (NCODA), and Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) have collaborated in gathering information for and developing this patient education guide. This guide represents a brief summary of the medication derived from information provided by the drug manufacturer and other resources.

This guide does not cover all existing information related to the possible uses, directions, doses, precautions, warnings, interactions, adverse effects, or risks associated with this medication and should not substitute for the advice of a qualified healthcare professional. Provision of this guide is for informational purposes only and does not constitute or imply endorsement, recommendation, or favoring of this medication by ACCC, HOPA, NCODA, or ONS, who assume no liability for and cannot ensure the accuracy of the information presented. All decisions related to taking this medication should be made with the guidance and under the direction of a qualified healthcare professional.

Permission: Patient Education Sheets are provided as a free educational resource for patients with cancer and their caregivers in need of concise, easy to understand information about cancer therapy. Healthcare providers are permitted to copy and distribute the sheets to patients as well as direct patients to the Patient Education Sheets website. However, commercial reproduction or reuse, as well as rebranding or reposting of any type, are strictly prohibited without permission of the copyright holders. Permission requests, including direct linking from Electronic Health Records, and licensing inquiries should be emailed to [patienteducation sheets@ncoda.org](mailto:patienteducation sheets@ncoda.org).

Copyright © 2025 by Network for Collaborative Oncology Development & Advancement, Inc. All rights reserved.

PES-505