

[Home](#)

2. Doxorubicin

Doxorubicin

Generic name: doxorubicin [*DOX-oh-ROO-bi-sin*]**Brand names:** [Adriamycin](#), Adriamycin RDF, Rubex, Adriamycin PFS**Dosage forms:** intravenous powder for injection (10 mg; 50 mg), intravenous solution (2 mg/mL)**Drug class:** [Antibiotics / antineoplastics](#)[Medically reviewed](#) by Drugs.com on Mar 14, 2025. Written by [Cerner Multum](#).[Uses](#) [Side effects](#) [Warnings](#) [Before taking](#) [Dosage](#) [Interactions](#) [FAQ](#)

What is doxorubicin?

Doxorubicin is used to treat different types of cancers that affect the breast, bladder, kidneys, ovaries, thyroid, stomach, lungs, bones, nerve tissues, joints, and soft tissues. Doxorubicin is also used to treat [Hodgkin lymphoma](#), [non-Hodgkin lymphoma](#), and certain types of leukemia.

Doxorubicin may also be used for purposes not listed in this medication guide.

Doxorubicin side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction**: hives; difficult breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Some side effects may occur during the injection. Tell your caregiver right away if you feel dizzy, nauseated, light-headed, sweaty, or have a [headache](#), chest tightness, [back pain](#), trouble breathing, or swelling in your face.

Doxorubicin may cause serious side effects. Call your doctor at once if you have:

- pain, blisters, or skin sores where the injection was given;
- missed menstrual periods;
- easy bruising, unusual bleeding (nose, mouth, vagina, or rectum), purple or red pinpoint spots under your skin;
- **low white blood cell counts**--fever, swollen gums, painful mouth sores, pain when swallowing, skin sores, cold or flu symptoms, cough, trouble breathing; or
- **signs of heart problems**--fast heartbeats, [shortness of breath](#) (even with mild exertion), feeling very weak or tired, swelling in your ankles or feet.

Doxorubicin may cause your urine to turn a reddish-orange color. **This side effect is usually not harmful.**

Common side effects of doxorubicin may include:

- nausea, vomiting; or
- [hair loss](#).

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

 [Doxorubicin side effects](#) (more detail)

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Warnings

You should not use doxorubicin if you have severe [liver disease](#), severe heart problems, very low blood cell counts caused by prior chemotherapy, or if you recently had a [heart attack](#).

Doxorubicin can weaken your immune system. Your blood may need to be tested often. Tell your doctor if you have unusual bruising or bleeding, or signs of [infection](#) (fever, chills, body aches).

Doxorubicin may cause dangerous effects on your heart. Call your doctor at once if you feel very weak or tired, or have fast heartbeats, shortness of breath (even with mild exertion), or swelling in your ankles or feet.

Before taking this medicine

You should not use this medicine if you are allergic to doxorubicin or similar medications (doxorubicin, [daunorubicin](#), [epirubicin](#), [idarubicin](#), [mitoxantrone](#)), or if you have:

- very low blood cell counts caused by chemotherapy you received in the past;
- severe liver disease;
- severe heart problems; or
- if you have recently had a heart attack.

Tell your doctor if you have ever had:

- severe liver disease;
- [heart disease](#) or [heart failure](#); or

- radiation treatment to your chest.

Tell your doctor about all other cancer medicines or radiation treatments you have received in the past.

Using doxorubicin may increase your risk of developing a bone marrow disease or other types of leukemia later in life. Ask your doctor about your specific risk.

You may need to have a negative pregnancy test before starting this treatment.

Both men and women using this medicine should use effective birth control to prevent pregnancy. Doxorubicin can harm an unborn baby or cause birth defects if the mother or father is using this medicine.

Keep using [birth control](#) for at least 6 months after your last dose. Tell your doctor right away if a pregnancy occurs while either the mother or the father is using doxorubicin.

This medicine may affect fertility (ability to have children) in both men and women. However, **it is important to use birth control to prevent pregnancy because doxorubicin can harm an unborn baby.**

Doxorubicin may also cause early [menopause](#), depending on your age when you receive this medicine. Ask your doctor about this risk.

You should not breastfeed while you are using doxorubicin.

How is doxorubicin given?

Doxorubicin is given as an infusion into a vein. A healthcare provider will give you this injection.

Tell your caregivers if you feel any burning, pain, or swelling around the IV needle when doxorubicin is injected.

Doxorubicin is sometimes given together with other cancer medications. You may be given other medications to prevent nausea, vomiting, or infections.

If any of this medication accidentally gets on your skin, wash it thoroughly with soap and warm water.

Doxorubicin can lower your blood cell counts. **Your blood will need to be tested often.** Your cancer treatments may be delayed based on the results.

 [Detailed Doxorubicin dosage information](#)

What happens if I miss a dose?

Call your doctor for instructions if you miss an appointment for your doxorubicin injection.

What happens if I overdose?

Since this medication is given by a healthcare professional in a medical setting, an overdose is unlikely to occur.

What should I avoid while taking doxorubicin?

Avoid being near people who are sick or have infections. Tell your doctor at once if you develop signs of infection.

Avoid activities that may increase your risk of bleeding or injury. Use extra care to prevent bleeding while shaving or brushing your teeth.

What other drugs will affect doxorubicin?

Many drugs can affect doxorubicin. This includes prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and [herbal products](#). **Not all possible interactions are listed here.** Tell your doctor about all your current medicines and any medicine you start or stop using.

 [Doxorubicin drug interactions](#) (more detail)

Does doxorubicin interact with my other drugs?

Enter medications to view a detailed interaction report using our [Drug Interaction Checker](#).

doxorubicin

+

Enter a drug name

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Further information

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use this medication only for the indication prescribed.

Always consult your healthcare provider to ensure the information displayed on this page applies to your personal circumstances.

[Medical Disclaimer](#)

DRUG STATUS

Availability

Rx Prescription only

Pregnancy & Lactation


 Risk data available

CSA Schedule*

N/A Not a controlled drug



Approval History

 Drug history at FDA



User Reviews & Ratings

5.4 / 10

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