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2. Paclitaxel

# Paclitaxel

**Generic name:** paclitaxel [ *PAK-li-TAK-sel* ]

**Brand names:** [Onxol](#), [Taxol](#)

**Dosage form:** intravenous solution (6 mg/mL)

**Drug class:** [Mitotic inhibitors](#)



[Medically reviewed](#) by Drugs.com on Aug 14, 2023. Written by [Cerner Multum](#).

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## What is paclitaxel?

Paclitaxel is used to treat [breast cancer](#), [ovarian cancer](#), and [lung cancer](#). It is also used to treat AIDS-related [Kaposi's sarcoma](#).

Paclitaxel is sometimes given after other treatments have failed.

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

## Paclitaxel side effects

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

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

- severe stomach pain or diarrhea;
- [cold symptoms](#) such as stuffy nose, sneezing, [sore throat](#);
- flushing (warmth, redness, or tingly feeling);
- numbness, tingling, or burning pain in your hands or feet;
- severe redness or irritation, swelling or a hard lump, or other skin changes where the injection was given (may occur 7 to 10 days after an injection);
- pain or burning when you urinate;
- cough with mucus, chest pain, feeling short of breath;
- chest pain, [shortness of breath](#), fast or slow heartbeats;
- a light-headed feeling, like you might pass out;

- severe [headache](#), blurred vision, pounding in your neck or ears;
- a seizure;
- easy bruising, unusual bleeding, purple or red spots under your skin;
- **low red blood cells (anemia)**--pale skin, unusual tiredness, feeling light-headed or short of breath, cold hands and feet; or
- **low white blood cell counts**--fever, mouth sores, skin sores, sore throat, cough, trouble breathing.

Your cancer treatments may be delayed or permanently discontinued if you have certain side effects.

**Common side effects of paclitaxel may include:**

- fever, chills, or other signs of [infection](#);
- anemia;
- feeling weak, tired, or light-headed;
- bleeding;
- trouble breathing or swallowing;
- [hair loss](#), skin rash, hives;
- numbness, tingling, or burning;
- swelling in your face, hands, or feet;
- sores or white patches in or around your mouth;
- joint or [muscle pain](#);
- nausea, vomiting, diarrhea; or
- tenderness or irritation where the medicine was injected.

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.

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

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## Warnings

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

Paclitaxel can lower blood cells that help your body fight infections and help your blood to clot. You may get an infection or bleed more easily. Call your doctor if you have unusual bruising or bleeding, or signs of infection (fever, sore throat, mouth sores, cough).

## Before taking this medicine

You should not be treated with paclitaxel if you are allergic to it, or if you have:

- low white blood cell (WBC) counts; or
- an allergy to [castor oil](#) (contained in paclitaxel and other medicines such as [cyclosporine](#) or [teniposide](#)).

Tell your doctor if you have ever had:

- heart problems; or
- [liver disease](#).

**Paclitaxel may harm an unborn baby.** Use effective [birth control](#) to prevent pregnancy, and tell your doctor if you become pregnant.

You should not breastfeed while you are using paclitaxel.

## How is paclitaxel given?

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

paclitaxel must be given slowly, and the infusion can take 3 to 24 hours to complete.

Paclitaxel is usually given once every 2 to 3 weeks. Follow your doctor's dosing instructions very carefully.

You may be given other medications to prevent an allergic reaction while you are receiving paclitaxel.

Your breathing, blood pressure, oxygen levels, kidney function, and other vital signs will be watched closely while you are receiving paclitaxel.

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

Paclitaxel can lower blood cells that help your body fight infections and help your blood to clot. **Your blood will need to be tested often.** Your cancer treatments may be delayed based on the results of these tests.

 [Detailed Paclitaxel dosage information](#)

## What happens if I miss a dose?

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

## What happens if I overdose?

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

## What should I avoid while using paclitaxel?

Paclitaxel contains alcohol and may cause a drunken feeling when the medicine is injected into your vein. Avoid drinking alcohol on the day of your paclitaxel injection.

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 paclitaxel?

**Sometimes it is not safe to use certain medications at the same time.** Some drugs can affect your blood levels of other drugs you take, which may increase side effects or make the medications less effective.

**Many drugs can affect paclitaxel.** 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.

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

## Does paclitaxel interact with my other drugs?

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

paclitaxel

+

Enter a drug name

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## Other brands

[Taxol](#), [Onxol](#)

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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](#)

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### 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

7.2 / 10

[10 Reviews](#)

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