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2. Cetuximab

# Cetuximab

**Generic name:** cetuximab [ *se-TUX-i-mab* ]**Brand name:** [Erbitux](#)**Dosage form:** intravenous solution (2 mg/mL)**Drug class:** [EGFR inhibitors](#)[Medically reviewed](#) by Drugs.com on Jan 24, 2025. Written by [Cerner Multum](#).[Uses](#) [Side effects](#) [Warnings](#) [Before taking](#) [Dosage](#) [Interactions](#)

## What is cetuximab?

Cetuximab is used to treat cancers of the colon and rectum. It is also used to treat [head and neck cancer](#).

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

## Cetuximab side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction** (hives, difficult breathing, swelling in your face or throat) or a **severe skin reaction** (fever, [sore throat](#), burning eyes, skin pain, red or purple skin rash with blistering and peeling).

Some side effects may occur during the infusion or several hours afterward. **Tell your caregiver right away** if you feel short of breath, itchy, nauseated, weak or dizzy, or if you have chest pain, [wheezing](#), noisy breathing, or a hoarse voice.

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

- eye pain or redness, puffy eyelids, drainage or crusting in your eyes, vision problems, or increased sensitivity to light;
- a new or worsening cough, chest pain, or [shortness of breath](#);
- an acne-like skin rash or any severe skin rash;
- redness or crusting around your hair follicles;
- redness, warmth, or puffiness under your skin;
- slow heartbeats, weak pulse, [fainting](#), slow breathing (breathing may stop);
- blisters or ulcers in your mouth, red or swollen gums, trouble swallowing;
- **low white blood cell counts**--fever, mouth sores, skin sores, sore throat, cough, trouble breathing; or
- **signs of an electrolyte imbalance**--increased thirst or urination, [constipation](#), [muscle pain](#) or weakness, leg

cramps, numbness or tingling, feeling jittery, irregular heartbeats, fluttering in your chest, or a choking feeling.

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

- [itching](#) or rash;
- changes in your fingernails or toenails;
- dry, cracked, or swollen skin;
- [headache](#);
- [diarrhea](#); or
- [infection](#).

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.

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

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## Warnings

**Cetuximab has caused life-threatening side effects in a small number of patients.** Your caregivers will watch you closely after you receive each dose of cetuximab.

Side effects may occur when this medicine is injected into your vein. **Tell your caregiver right away** if you feel dizzy, feverish, itchy, or short of breath during the infusion.

**Cetuximab can have long-lasting effects on your body.** You may need frequent medical tests for at least 8 weeks after your last dose.

## Before taking this medicine

You should not use this medicine if you are allergic to cetuximab or to mouse protein.

Tell your doctor if you have ever had:

- heart rhythm problems;
- lung disease or a breathing disorder;
- congestive [heart failure](#);
- [coronary artery disease](#) (clogged arteries); or
- an electrolyte imbalance (such as low levels of potassium or magnesium in your blood).

**Tell your doctor if you are allergic to red meat, or if you've ever been bitten by a tick.** If so, you may be more likely to have certain reactions during or shortly after injection of this medicine.

**Cetuximab may harm an unborn baby.** Use effective [birth control](#) to prevent pregnancy while you are using this medicine and for at least 2 months after your last dose. Tell your doctor if you become pregnant.

**Do not breastfeed while using this medicine,** and for at least 2 months after your last dose.

## How is cetuximab given?

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

cetuximab must be given slowly, and the infusion can take up to 2 hours to complete. You may be given other medications to help prevent serious side effects or allergic reaction.

Cetuximab is often used in combination with other cancer medications and/or radiation treatments. You may receive another cancer medicine 1 hour after your cetuximab infusion.

**Cetuximab has caused life-threatening side effects in a small number of patients.** After each cetuximab infusion, your caregivers will watch you closely to make sure you do not have any serious side effects.

Cetuximab is usually given until your body no longer responds to the medication. Follow your doctor's dosing instructions very carefully.

You may need frequent medical tests to be sure this medicine is not causing harmful effects. Your cancer treatments may be delayed based on the results.

Cetuximab can have long-lasting effects on your body. You may need medical tests for at least 8 weeks after your last dose.

 [Detailed Cetuximab dosage information](#)

## What happens if I miss a dose?

Call your doctor for instructions if you miss an appointment for your cetuximab infusion.

## What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222.

## What should I avoid while receiving cetuximab?

Cetuximab could make you [sunburn](#) more easily. **Avoid sunlight or tanning beds while you are receiving cetuximab and for at least 2 months after your treatment ends.** Wear protective clothing and use [sunscreen](#) (SPF 30 or higher) when you are outdoors.

## What other drugs will affect cetuximab?

Other drugs may affect cetuximab, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, [vitamins](#), and [herbal products](#). Tell your doctor about all your current medicines and any medicine you start or stop using.

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

## Does cetuximab interact with my other drugs?

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

+

Add

## Cetuximab Biosimilars

Biosimilar and interchangeable products are biological products that are highly similar to and have no clinically meaningful differences from the reference product.

## Reference products

These are biological products that have already been approved by the FDA, against which biosimilar products are

compared. There is 1 for cetuximab.

## Erbitux (cetuximab) - Eli Lilly and Company



Formulation type	Strength
Single-Dose Vial	100 mg/50 mL (2 mg/mL)
Single-Dose Vial	200 mg/100 mL (2 mg/mL)

View [Erbitux](#) information in detail.

## More about cetuximab

- [Check interactions](#)
- [Compare alternatives](#)
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- [Drug class: EGFR inhibitors](#)
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## Patient resources

- [Cetuximab advanced reading](#)

## Other brands

[Erbitux](#)

## Professional resources

- [Cetuximab monograph](#)

## Other brands

[Erbitux](#)

## Related treatment guides

- [Head and Neck Cancer](#)
- [Squamous Cell Carcinoma](#)
- [Colorectal Cancer](#)
- [Non Small Cell Lung Cancer](#)

- [Pancreatic Cancer](#)

## 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

7.1 / 10

[10 Reviews](#)

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