

## Intron A (Interferon A) for Kidney Cancer

Interferon is a medication used to treat advanced kidney cancer in adults

Dosage: Varies

How supplied: **INTRON A Powder for Injection/Reconstitution (INTRON A & INTRON A Solution for Injection in Vials)**

Storage: Needs to be stored in the refrigerator

Route of Administration: Subcutaneous injection

Schedule: Typical schedule is three times a week on alternating days.

How should I take Interferon?

- Take it exactly the way your healthcare provider tells you
- Treatment is best tolerated when administered in the evening
- Allow the drug to reach room temperature prior to administration
- Talk to your Health Care Provider about which over-the-counter medicines you can take to help prevent or decrease symptoms.
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. You can take it up to 12 hours after you normally take it.
- If you think you have taken an extra dose of this medication, call your healthcare provider right away

Dietary restrictions: No dietary restrictions

Recommend fluid intake of at least 64 ounces (2 L) per day

I should tell my healthcare provider if I:

- have or had liver problems
- have been or are being treated for a mental illness, including depression or suicidal thoughts
- have heart problems or an irregular heartbeat
- have a history of a stroke
- have thyroid problems
- have ever been addicted to drugs or alcohol
- have diabetes
- have colitis (Inflammation of your intestine)
- have a condition that is affected by your immune system such as hepatitis, HIV infection, lupus, or rheumatoid arthritis
- had recent surgery (within the last 7 days) or are going to have surgery
- have any other medical conditions

- am pregnant or plan to become pregnant. Intron A can harm your unborn baby. You should not become pregnant while you are taking Intron A.

Are breast-feeding or plan to breast-feed. It is not known if Intron A passes into your breast milk. You and your healthcare provider should decide if you will take Intron A or breast-feed. You should not do both.

Tell your healthcare provider at each visit about all the medications you take including prescription and non-prescription medicine, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

Vaccination with live vaccines or close contact with someone who has received a live vaccine should be avoided during treatment with Intron A.

Examples of live vaccines include:

- intranasal flu vaccine
- shingles vaccine
- chicken pox
- oral polio
- measles, mumps and rubella

## What are the possible side effects of Intron A

Intron A may cause serious side effects including:

- Heart attack or stroke: chest pain or pressure, pain in your arms, back, neck or jaw, shortness of breath, numbness or weakness on one side of your body, trouble talking, headache, or dizziness.
- Change in behavior, confusion, depression, or suicidal thoughts
- New or worsening autoimmune disease
- Infection
- Liver damage
- GI bleeding
- Low white blood cell and platelet count
- Vision loss or blindness
- Thyroid problems
- Inflammation of the pancreas
- Blood sugar problems
- Lung problems
- Allergic reaction
- Numbness and/or tingling in the arms or legs

Common side effects of Intron A include:

- Flu like symptoms
  - Headache, muscle aches, tiredness and fever
- Nausea
- Loss of appetite

- Weight loss
- Feeling tired (fatigue)
- Skin reactions: redness, itching, or swelling at the injection site
- Hair thinning (alopecia)

These are not all of the possible side effects of Intron A. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that bother you or that do not go away. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. For more information, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist.

Resources: Merck & Co., Inc.  
Patient information: 1-800-622-4477

Adapted from the Intron A package insert. Merck Sharp and Dohme a subsidiary of Merck & Co. Inc. Revised 02/2016

KCA disclaimer statement: you should rely primarily upon your doctor for medical information.

[www.kidneycancer.org](http://www.kidneycancer.org)