

Cytarabine, also known as cytosine arabinoside, is a chemotherapy medication used to treat acute myeloid leukemia (AML), acute lymphocytic leukemia (ALL), chronic myelogenous leukemia (CML), and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. It is given by injection into a vein, under the skin, or into the cerebrospinal fluid. There is a liposomal formulation for which there is tentative evidence of better outcomes in lymphoma involving the meninges.

Common side effects include bone marrow suppression, vomiting, diarrhea, liver problems, rash, ulcer formation in the mouth, and bleeding. Other serious side effects include loss of consciousness, lung disease, and allergic reactions. Use during pregnancy may harm the baby.

Cytarabine is in the antimetabolite family of medication. It works by blocking the function of DNA polymerase.

Cytarabine was patented in 1960 and approved for medical use in 1969.

It is on the World Health Organization's List of Essential Medicines, the most important medication needed in a basic health system.

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