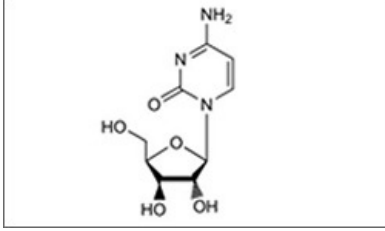


Arabinosylcytosine, Cytarabine

Printed from <https://www.cancerquest.org/patients/drug-reference/arabinosylcytosine-cytarabine> on 04/20/2026



Brand name: Cytosar®

Brand name: ara-C

IUPAC: 4-amino-1-[(2R,3S,4S,5R)-3,4-dihydroxy-5-(hydroxymethyl)oxolan-2-yl]pyrimidin-2-one

FDA approval: Yes

[Manufacturer Link](#)

Usage:

Malignancies for which cytarabine is used include: Acute non-lymphocytic leukemia, Acute lymphocytic leukemia and Chronic myelocytic leukemia. Cytarabine (Cytosar®, ara-C) is administered as an infusion or as an injection under the skin.

Mechanism:

Cytarabine (Cytosar®, ara-C) is an antimetabolite that acts as a pyrimidine antagonist. It is thought that its primary activity is interrupting DNA synthesis.

The molecular structure above shows Arabinosylcytosine, Cytarabine.

Side effects:

Common side effects include: bone marrow suppression, anorexia, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, oral/anal inflammation or ulceration, rash, fever. Cytarabine (Cytosar®, ara-C) is a suppressor of bone marrow activity. It is important to monitor blood cell and platelet counts throughout the duration of treatment with blood tests done often. [1](#)

¹ Cytosar. Product Monograph. Pfizer. September, 2014. [<http://www.pfizer.ca/sites/g/files/g10017036/f/201410/cytosar-non-annotated-pm-175940-E.pdf>]

Contraindications:

Cytarabine should not be taken by women who are pregnant and patients should not become pregnant while using this drug, as it may have harmful effects on the developing fetus. [1](#)

¹ Cytosar. Product Monograph. Pfizer. September, 2014. [<http://www.pfizer.ca/sites/g/files/g10017036/f/201410/cytosar-non-annotated-pm-175940-E.pdf>]