Dactinomycin (also called Cosmegen®) is an anticancer medicine. Dactinomycin is a clear, gold-colored liquid given into a vein (IV).

Dactinomycin can pose a health hazard to caregivers. All caregivers should take safety precautions while giving this drug. For 48 hours after this drug is given, the patient’s body fluids can contain the drug. During that 48-hour period, caregivers should follow safety guidelines when handling the patient’s vomit, blood, urine, and bowel movements, including diapers. These guidelines include wearing gloves when cleaning up body fluids. For a complete list of safety precautions, see “Do you know… Protecting caregivers from drug hazards.”

Possible side effects

Early
- Irritated tissue and skin damage at the IV site
- Nausea
- Vomiting

Later (more than a day after treatment starts)
- Diarrhea
- Loss of appetite
- Feeling tired
- Acne
- Skin redness in an area of previous radiation therapy
- Mouth sores
- Low blood counts after 7-14 days
- Hair loss

These are the most common side effects, but there may be others. Please report all side effects to the doctor or nurse.

In case of a severe side effect or reaction, call the doctor, nurse or pharmacist at 595-3300. If you are outside the Memphis area, dial toll-free 1-866-2STJUDE (1-866-278-5833), and press 0 once the call is connected.
### Dactinomycin

**Special instructions**

- Dactinomycin can cause nausea and vomiting. The doctor may prescribe medicine to keep you from feeling sick and throwing up after you receive dactinomycin.
- Tell the nurse right away if you have pain or redness at the IV site.
- It may be easier for you to get infections while you are receiving dactinomycin. Stay away from crowds or people with colds, flu, or other infections.
- This medicine may make your mouth sore and irritated. The doctor or nurse may give you oral rinses to keep your mouth clean after you receive dactinomycin.