

# Ofatumumab

This leaflet is offered as a guide to you and your family. The possible benefits of treatment vary; for some people chemotherapy may reduce the risk of the cancer coming back, for others it may control the cancer and its symptoms. Your doctor will explain to you whether you will receive chemotherapy or another type of treatment, or a combination of both. Your doctor or nurse will be happy to answer any questions you have about your treatment. You will find it useful to refer to the booklet 'Chemotherapy, a guide' which gives general information on chemotherapy and side effects.

## Your treatment

Your doctor or nurse clinician has prescribed for you an immune treatment called ofatumumab. This type of cancer medication is known as a monoclonal antibody. Monoclonal antibodies are used to try and destroy some types of cancer cells while causing minimal harm to normal cells. Ofatumumab works by targeting proteins on the surface of certain white cells (lymphocytes) which includes those affected by CLL.

### The treatment consists of the following:

Ofatumumab is given via an infusion (drip) and is started at a slow rate but is then increased at regular intervals if you tolerate the infusion. This means the treatment usually lasts about 4½ hours but may be longer.

You will receive ofatumumab weekly for 8 weeks then monthly for 4 months (total treatment = 6 months).

Before you have your treatment with ofatumumab, you will be given 2 paracetamol tablets and intravenous (into a vein) injections of an antihistamine and hydrocortisone. These can help to prevent any immediate allergic reactions.

This treatment can have serious or possibly life-threatening side effects. It is very important that you report side effects straight away. Don't delay, if you feel unwell, please ring The Christie Hotline on 0161 446 3658. The lines are open 24 hours a day.

### Increased risk of serious infection

You are vulnerable to infection while you are having chemotherapy. Minor infections can become life-threatening in a matter of hours if left untreated. Symptoms of infection include fever, shivering, sweats, sore throat, diarrhoea, discomfort when you pass urine, cough or breathlessness. We recommend that you use a digital thermometer so you can check your temperature. You can buy one from your local chemist.

**If you feel unwell, you have symptoms of an infection or your temperature is 37.5°C or above, or below 36°C contact The Christie Hotline straight away.**

## Possible side effects

Ofatumumab can cause many different side effects. Some are more likely to occur than others. Everyone is different and not everyone gets all the side effects. Most side effects are usually temporary, but in some rare cases they can be life-threatening. It is important to tell your hospital doctor or nurse about any side effects so they can be monitored and, where possible, treated.

### Common side effects (more than 1 in 10)



- **Infusion related reactions**

The side effects of ofatumumab commonly occur while you are having the infusion including chills, fever and shivering. If you have any of these side effects please tell your nurse straightaway, however, your progress will be monitored regularly. Rarely, you may also develop a skin rash, headache, palpitations, tumour pain, sore throat or sickness. If this happens or you notice any swelling around the eyes and face, feel dizzy or faint, or have any shortness of breath during the chemotherapy, please tell the nurse or doctor immediately. This may be an allergic reaction and they may need to slow down or stop the drip. You may feel tired and have a headache, these symptoms are related to your treatment and usually go when the infusion has finished.

If you do not have any reactions to your first treatment, we may be able to give you subsequent infusions over a shorter period of time.

- **Bruising or bleeding**

This treatment can reduce the production of platelets which help the blood clot. Tell your doctor know if you have any unexplained bruising or bleeding, such as nosebleeds, bloodspots or rashes on the skin, and bleeding gums. You may need a platelet transfusion.

- **Anaemia (low number of red blood cells)**

While having this treatment you may become anaemic. This may make you feel tired and breathless. Let your doctor or nurse know if these symptoms are a problem. You may need a blood transfusion.

### Uncommon side effects (less than 1 in 10)

- **Lethargy**

Ofatumumab may make you feel tired and lacking in energy. It can be frustrating when you feel unable to cope with routine tasks. If you do feel tired, take rest and get help with household chores. If necessary, take time off work. Gentle exercise such as walking can be beneficial.

### Rare side effects (less than 1 in 100)

- **Tumour lysis syndrome**

Drugs used to treat cancer can cause side effects when the cancer cells are destroyed too quickly. This is called tumour lysis syndrome or TLS. To prevent this you will be given a drug called allopurinol and you should also drink plenty of fluids

particularly with your first cycle of treatment. You will be monitored for signs of TLS through regular blood tests.

- **Gut problems**

Rarely, ofatumumab can cause your bowel to stop working properly. If you develop any abdominal discomfort you should tell your doctor or nurse.

- **Progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML)**

This is a rare but serious and potentially life-threatening condition that has occurred in people treated with ofatumumab but also occurs in people with weakened immune systems. In the unlikely event that you experience memory loss, trouble thinking, difficulty walking or loss of vision you should tell your doctor or nurse immediately.

- **Skin rash**

You may develop a skin rash. This is usually mild and easily treated. Please tell your doctor on your next visit. Sometimes blisters develop on your skin.

### **Serious and potentially life threatening side effects**

In a small proportion of patients chemotherapy can result in very severe side effects which may rarely result in death. The team caring for you will discuss the risk of these side effects with you.

## **Sex, contraception & fertility**

**Protecting your partner and contraception:** We recommend that you or your partner use a condom during sexual intercourse while you are having the course of chemotherapy. Chemotherapy is dangerous to unborn babies and this will also protect you and your partner from any chemotherapy drugs that may be present in semen and in the vagina. If you suspect that you may be pregnant please tell your doctor immediately.

**Fertility:** This chemotherapy may affect your ability to have children. Your doctor or nurse should have discussed this with you. If not, please ask them before you start treatment.

### **Late side effects**

Long term possible side effects of treatment with ofatumumab are not yet known. Speak with your doctor if you wish to discuss this further.

## Contacts

If you have any general questions or concerns about your treatment, please contact the Haematology Team.

- Anne-Marie Kelly **0161 446 8167**  
Haematology Nurse specialist
- Haematology and Transplant day unit **0161 446 3924**
- General enquiries **0161 446 3000**
- For urgent advice ring The Christie Hotline **0161 446 3658** (24 hours)

Your consultant is: .....

Your hospital number is: .....

Your key worker is: .....

If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

We try to ensure that all our information given to patients is accurate, balanced and based on the most up-to-date scientific evidence. If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact **patient.information@christie.nhs.uk**

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For more information about The Christie and our services, please visit **www.christie.nhs.uk** or visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham or Salford.

Contact The Christie Hotline for urgent support and specialist advice

**The Christie Hotline:  
0161 446 3658**

Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

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