



Rotterdam regimen (Etoposide and cisplatin)

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. Chemotherapy is the most commonly prescribed anti-cancer treatment but other types of treatment are also used. 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 a nurse clinician has prescribed for you a course of treatment known as the Rotterdam regimen consisting of etoposide and cisplatin. This involves giving chemotherapy via a drip and also capsules to take by mouth.

The treatment consists of the following:

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| Day 1 | } | Cisplatin and hydration (fluids) via a drip over approx 13 hours.
This involves an overnight stay in hospital each week. |
| Day 8 | | |
| Day 15 | | |
| | | AND |

Day 1 to 15 Etoposide capsules to take at home (50mg once a day)
This treatment is then repeated after a two-week break. You will receive 6 doses of cisplatin IV chemotherapy in total. After this you will continue treatment with oral etoposide capsules, which are to be taken daily for 21 days (3 weeks course followed by 1 week break) for a total of 6 to 9 cycles.

You will have a routine blood test before the start of each treatment to monitor the effects of the chemotherapy on your blood count.

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.

Possible side effects

Chemotherapy 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.

Extravasation is when chemotherapy leaks outside the vein. If you develop redness, soreness or pain at the injection site **at any time** please let us know straight away. If you feel pain, tell your doctor or nurse as they can slow the drip to reduce the reaction.

Common side effects (more than 1 in 10)



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.



• 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.



• Bruising or bleeding

This treatment can reduce the production of platelets which help the blood clot. Let 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.



Kidney function

Cisplatin can affect your kidney function and rarely cause serious damage to the kidneys. We will monitor how your kidneys are working while you are having treatment by checking your kidney blood tests every week. It is important to drink plenty of fluids (at least 8 cups per day) the day before and for a few days after chemotherapy. If you are unable to drink or think you might be dehydrated please call The Christie Hotline immediately. We would also advise that you avoid non-steroidal anti-inflammatory painkillers, for example ibuprofen, while you are receiving cisplatin.

• Nausea and vomiting (sickness)

The severity of this varies from person to person. Anti-sickness medication may be given along with your chemotherapy to prevent this. You may also be given anti-sickness tablets to take at home. If you continue to feel or be sick, contact your GP or this hospital, because your anti-sickness medication may need to be changed or increased.

- **Hair loss**

This usually starts 3-4 weeks after the first dose of Etoposide, although it may happen earlier. Hair will usually be lost completely. You may also have thinning and loss of eyelashes, eyebrows and other body hair. This is temporary and your hair will regrow once the treatment ends. If you would like an appointment with the wig service, this can be arranged for you. Ask the staff for a copy of the 'Wig Fitting Service'.

- **Constipation**

Try to drink plenty of fluids. Report this to your hospital doctor or nurse who can advise you regarding diet and who may prescribe a suitable laxative. Ask the staff for a copy of Eating: Help Yourself which has useful ideas about diet when you are having treatment.

- **Lethargy**

Some chemotherapy 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.

Uncommon side effects (less than 1 in 10)

- **Tingling & numbness in the fingers or toes**

This is only usually mild and temporary but sometimes lasts for some time or becomes permanent. Please report these symptoms to your doctor on your next hospital visit.

- **Tinnitus & high frequency hearing loss**

You may develop tinnitus (ringing in the ears), this sensation should subside when your treatment finishes. High frequency hearing loss can also occur with this chemotherapy. This may be permanent.

- **Sore mouth**

Your mouth may become sore or dry, or you may notice small mouth ulcers during this treatment. Drinking plenty of fluids and cleaning your teeth regularly and gently with a soft toothbrush can help to reduce the risk of this happening. We can prescribe a mouthwash for you to use during treatment. You can dilute this with water if your mouth is sore. Ask your doctor or nurse for further advice. There is also general mouth care information in the chemotherapy booklet. If you continue to have a sore mouth, please contact The Christie Hotline.

- **Strange taste**

Occasionally during treatment you may experience a strange taste, sometimes described as metallic or bitter. A strongly flavoured sweet or mint will help to disguise this.

- **Diarrhoea**

You may get upset bowels with this chemotherapy. If this becomes a problem while you are having treatment, anti-diarrhoea tablets can be prescribed by your GP for a temporary period until this is resolved. If the problem persists contact this hospital. Ask the staff for a copy of Eating: Help Yourself which has useful ideas about diet when you are having treatment.

Rare Side effects (less than 1 in 100)

- **Skin changes**

Etoposide can cause a rash, which may be itchy. Your doctor can prescribe medicine to help with this. Let your doctor know if this happens. Your skin may also darken due to an excess production of pigment. It usually returns to normal after the treatment has finished.

- **Allergic reaction**

Signs of an allergic reaction include skin rashes and itching, a high temperature, shivering, redness or darkening of the face, dizziness, a headache, breathlessness, anxiety and a need to pass urine. You will be monitored for any signs of an allergic reaction during the treatment. Tell your doctor or nurse if you have any of these effects.

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.

Other medicines

Some medicines can be harmful to take when you are having chemotherapy. Let your doctor know about any medications you are taking, including non-prescribed medicines such as complementary therapies and herbal remedies.

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

Some side effects may become evident only after a number of years. In reaching any decision with you about treatment, the potential benefit you receive from treatment will be weighed against the risks of serious long term side effects to the heart, lungs, kidneys and bone marrow. With some drugs there is also a small but definite risk of developing another cancer. If any of these problems specifically applies to you, the doctor will discuss these with you and note this on your consent form.

Contacts

If you have any general questions or concerns about your treatment, please ring the area where you are having treatment:

- Administration enquiries 0161 918 7606/7610
- Chemotherapy nurse: 0161 918 7171
- Clinical trials unit 0161 918 7663

For urgent advice ring The Christie Hotline on
0161 446 3658 (24 hours)

Your consultant is:

Your hospital number is:

Your key worker is:



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Details of the sources used are available, please contact Patient.Information@christie.nhs.uk