



TIP

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 has prescribed for you a treatment which includes the chemotherapy drugs Taxol (Paclitaxel), Cisplatin and Ifosfamide.

Day 1 Taxol (Paclitaxel) via a drip over 3 hours

Days 1 to 5 Cisplatin via a drip over 2 hours

Days 1 to 5 Ifosfamide via a drip over 2 hours

In addition to the chemotherapy we will also give you intravenous hydration (fluids) and a drug called Mesna.

Treatment is given every 3 weeks for 4 to 8 cycles

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

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.

Common side effects (more than 1 in 10)

- **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.

- **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.

- **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.

- **Tinnitus**

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.

- **Hair loss**

Some hair loss may occur during treatment. It is advisable to avoid perms, colours, use of hot brushes and vigorous, frequent washing that could increase hair loss. Please remember that this is a temporary side effect and your hair will grow back when your treatment is completed. 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* leaflet.

- **Constipation**

It is common to become constipated. Try to drink plenty of fluids and eat foods high in fibre. Tell your doctor who may prescribe a suitable laxative.

- **Diarrhoea**

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 some useful ideas about diet when you are having treatment. **If you develop severe diarrhoea it is important to contact The Christie Hotline straightaway as this may be a sign of a serious infection. Don't delay!**

- **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.

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

This is only usually mild and temporary. However, on rare occasions it may be permanent. Please report these symptoms to your nurse or doctor on your next hospital visit.

- **Muscle pains**

Sometimes you may experience pain in the muscles in your legs. A simple painkiller will help. Ask your doctor for advice on this.

Uncommon side effects (less than 1 in 10)

- **Allergic reaction**

Signs of an allergic reaction include skin rashes and itching, a high temperature, shivering, redness of the face, a feeling of dizziness, headache, breathlessness, anxiety, and a desire to pass urine. You will be monitored for any sign of an allergic reaction during treatment. It is important to tell your nurse or doctor if you have any of these signs.

- **Low blood pressure**

Your blood pressure will be checked during your treatment. Let the doctor know if you feel faint or dizzy.

- **Changes in heart rate**

Paclitaxel (Taxol) can sometimes cause a temporary slowing of the heart rate known as bradycardia. This usually does not cause any harm.

- **Liver function**

Your liver may be temporarily affected. Paclitaxel (Taxol) may cause changes in the way that your liver works. Your liver will return to normal when the treatment is finished. This is very unlikely to cause you any harm, but your doctor will monitor this carefully. Samples of your blood will be taken from time to time to check your liver is working properly.

- **Bladder irritation**

Ifosfamide can cause a burning sensation on passing urine. This is caused by irritation of the bladder walls by the chemotherapy leaving the body. You will be given a drug called Mesna with your chemotherapy which you should prevent this side effect, but if you do have a burning sensation on passing urine, please let us know.

Rare side effects (less than 1 in 100)

- **Irritation to the brain**

Ifosfamide can cause irritation to the brain. You may notice vivid dreams while you are on the drip (while the chemotherapy is actually being given). Sometimes people get very drowsy and sleepy or may have visual hallucinations. Please tell the nurse if you begin to feel any of these symptoms. These symptoms usually quickly go away if the drip is stopped and there are not any permanent effects. However, rarely, Ifosfamide can cause a loss of consciousness which can last for several days. Your doctor or nurse can give you more information about this.

- **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.

- **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.

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

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:

- Catherine Pettersen 0161 918 7328
Macmillan Urology CNS
- Administration enquiries 0161 918 7606/7610
- Chemotherapy nurse: 0161 918 7171
- Clinical trials unit 0161 918 7663

For 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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