



Cisplatin and 5-Fluorouracil (Urology)

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 nurse clinician has prescribed a regimen of treatment for you which includes the chemotherapy cisplatin and 5-fluorouracil (5FU).

Day 1 Cisplatin by drip over 24 hours. Given with plenty of fluid.

Days 2 to 5 5FU given via a portable infusion pump.

Day 21 Restart with the next cycle.

The treatment is repeated every 3 weeks, usually for 2 or 3 cycles but occasionally more.

You will have a routine blood test before the start of each cycle of treatment.

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.

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.

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.



- **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.

You will have a routine blood test before each treatment to monitor the effects of the chemotherapy. Occasionally we may not be able to go ahead with your treatment until your blood cells are back to a safe level. In this case your chemotherapy will usually be put back (deferred) a week.



- **Kidney damage**

It is important to monitor how your kidneys are working while you are having treatment as the cisplatin can put a strain on them. Before you start the treatment you will need to have a test called a GFR. This is performed in the Radioisotope Department and is a series of blood tests. The GFR will be repeated before alternate cycles of chemotherapy. Your routine blood tests will also give us an idea of how well your kidneys are working. It is important to drink plenty of fluids (at least 8 cups per day) during your course of chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

- **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.



- **Diarrhoea**

If this becomes a problem while you are having treatment, anti-diarrhoea tablets can be bought from a pharmacy or prescribed by your GP for a temporary period until this is resolved. If the problem persists contact this hospital. **If you develop severe diarrhoea it is important to contact this hospital straightaway as this may be a sign of a serious infection. Don't delay!**

- **Constipation**

You may become constipated during this treatment. Try to drink plenty of fluids and eat foods high in fibre. Report this to your hospital doctor 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.

- **Loss of appetite**

The chemotherapy may reduce your appetite. You may find some helpful tips in the booklet called *Eating: Help Yourself*.

- **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.

- **Darkening of the veins**

Fluorouracil can irritate the vein wall and can cause discolouration. So you may get brown marks along the course of the vein where the drip was inserted, and your arm can also become itchy. This will usually fade over time. Please tell your hospital doctor at your next appointment if you have any problems.

- **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. However, on rare occasions it may be permanent. Please report these symptoms to your nurse or 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.

- **Hair thinning**

It is uncommon to lose hair with this treatment although it may thin a little. 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.'*

- **Sensitivity to the sun**

Some chemotherapy can make your skin more sensitive to the sun than usual. Sit in the shade, avoid too much sun and use a high factor sunblock cream. Asian and African-Caribbean people may develop noticeable light patches on their skin.

- **Skin rash**

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



- **Sore hands and feet**

If the skin on your **hands and feet** becomes sore, contact the hospital straightaway. Tablets and cream can be prescribed to help you. Try to keep your hands and feet cool and, if possible, uncovered or wear loose-fitting cotton socks.

- **Brittle/discoloured nails**

Your nails may become a little discoloured or brittle while you are having treatment. Any changes in your nails will gradually improve after your treatment has finished.

- **Sore eyes**

You may get a **dry, gritty feeling** in your eyes following treatment. If this happens, using Hypromellose eye drops will help to ease the discomfort. If the problem persists, contact this hospital. Your eyes may also water. This will improve in time and needs no specific treatment.

- **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.

Rare side effects (less than 1 in 100)



- **Chest pain or stroke**

A small number of patients receiving 5-Fluorouracil (5FU), UFT or capecitabine can experience chest pain (angina) or rarely have a heart attack. Extremely rarely this may lead to death. Other complications such as stroke or mini-stroke can happen but are exceptionally rare. If you develop any of these symptoms you should contact your hospital doctor for advice. In an emergency you should go immediately to your nearest accident and emergency department.

You will have an electrocardiograph (ECG) to check your heart before you start your chemotherapy.



- **Blood clots**

During chemotherapy you are more at risk of blood clots in the legs (DVT) or lungs (PE). Occasionally these clots can be life-threatening. To help prevent clots, keep mobile and drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids.

- **Allergic reaction**

Ask the staff for help if you notice any of the following:

- Some people have hot flushes when the drug is being given.
- Fevers and chills: back pain, shortness of breath, headaches and swelling of the face may occur during the time the drug is being given. If this happens please tell the staff straightaway. Your doctor may prescribe a drug that can help to reduce these side effects and, if necessary, we can give you this before your next treatment.

- **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.

- **Hair loss**

The hair may fall out gradually 10 to 14 days following your first course of treatment. The time scale varies from person to person. Please remember that it 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'.

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:

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