



# Bendamustine

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 course of treatment with bendamustine.

The treatment is given every **once every 3 to 4 weeks**. Your doctor will decide how frequently you should receive bendamustine. Bendamustine can be given on its own or in combination with other treatments such as Rituximab (see separate information sheet).

Treatment is given for 3 to 6 cycles. The treatment is given as:

**Days 1 and 2:** Bendamustine via a drip over 1 hour

You will have a routine blood test and medical review before the start of each cycle of treatment. This is so your team can monitor and manage any side effects as well as assess your response to treatment.

As you are having Bendamustine, if you need a blood or platelet transfusion, the blood transfusion laboratory will select 'irradiated' blood. This is to reduce the risk of a serious reaction. We will give you more information about this.

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.

## **Tumour Lysis Syndrome**

This treatment may cause the rapid breakdown of lymphoma cells, which may lead to abnormalities in the blood. This problem is more likely if you have a lot of disease or if your kidneys do not work as well as they should do. Your doctor will tell you if you are at risk. You may be given a kidney-protective medicine called allopurinol for the first cycle of treatment, and your doctor may do additional blood tests to monitor this side effect. We sometimes admit patients for the first treatment to give intravenous fluids and kidney-protective medication and twice daily monitoring of blood tests for 48 hours.

## **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 pharmacy.

**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.

- **Nausea & vomiting (sickness)**

You may have mild to moderate nausea and vomiting. You will be given anti-sickness tablets to take at home, in addition to intravenous anti-sickness medication before every dose of bendamustine. If you continue to feel or be sick, contact your GP or The Christie, your anti-sickness medication may 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.

- **Hair thinning**

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.'

- **Upset bowels**

You may get upset bowels with this chemotherapy:

**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. Ask the staff for a copy of 'Eating: Help Yourself' which has useful ideas about diet when you are having treatment.

**Constipation.** Try to drink plenty of fluids and eat foods high in fibre. Tell your doctor who may prescribe a suitable laxative.

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

- **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.

- **Effect on the heart**

Although this is not common, Bendamustine can cause palpitations, irregular heart beat or pain in the chest. Please phone for an ambulance if you have chest pain. It is very rare for Bendamustine to cause heart attacks. If you have questions about this side effect, please discuss this with your doctor.

- **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.

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

- **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

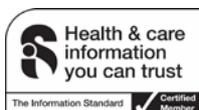
If you have any general questions or concerns about your treatment, please ring the area where you are having treatment:

- Haematology day unit 0161 446 3924
- Lymphoma clinical nurse specialist 0161 446 8573
- Lymphoma secretaries 0161 446 3753 Professor Radford/Dr Linton  
0161 446 8574 Professor Illidge  
0161 446 3956 Dr Smith  
0161 446 3332 Professor Cowan  
0161 446 3302 Dr Harris  
0161 446 3869 Dr Bloor
- Palatine Treatment Ward 0161 446 3960/3961 or 3925
- General enquiries 0161 446 3000
- 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