



Bevacizumab (colorectal cancer)

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 for you a treatment which includes the monoclonal antibody bevacizumab. This treatment is often given in combination with chemotherapy.

Day 1 Bevacizumab by drip over 90 minutes. Subsequent infusions may be given over 60 or 30 minutes depending on how well treatment has been tolerated.

Repeat every 2 to 3 weeks alongside chemotherapy.

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.

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)

- **High blood pressure**

You will need your blood pressure checking throughout your treatment as some patients experience a rise in their blood pressure measurements. Most patients don't experience any problems due to this but will be started on tablets to control their blood pressure. These medications can usually be stopped once bevacizumab treatment has stopped. Doses of bevacizumab may need to be missed until your blood pressure is under control.

- **Protein in the urine**

This can occur due to effects of bevacizumab on the kidneys. It doesn't normally cause symptoms but requires careful monitoring. Before each dose of treatment you will have your urine tested for protein. If protein is identified you may need to have a 24-hour urine collection to assess how well your kidneys are working. Bevacizumab may be stopped until the protein found in the urine has resolved.

Uncommon side-effects (less than 1 in 10)

- **Slow wound healing**

Bevacizumab can slow the healing of wounds. Your doctor will discuss this with you if you have a post-operative scar or if surgery is planned after a course of chemotherapy and bevacizumab.

- **Increased risk of bruising or bleeding**

Minor nose bleeds are commonly seen in patients receiving chemotherapy. However, if you develop unusual bruising or bleeding contact the hotline number for advice immediately. Due to the increased risk of bleeding you should not take high-dose aspirin (more than 325mg daily) although low-dose aspirin (75mg daily) can be continued.

- **Bowel perforation**

A small hole can sometimes develop in the wall of the bowel (perforation). You'll be closely monitored when you come for treatment but if you develop any pain or abdominal swelling contact the hotline number for advice immediately.

- **Blood clots**

There is an increased risk of blood clots in patients receiving bevacizumab. This can cause a variety of symptoms depending on which blood vessel the clot is affecting, such as swollen leg, breathlessness or chest pain. If you do develop a blood clot you'll need to have treatment to thin your blood and dissolve the clot.

- **Allergic reaction**

Occasionally allergic reactions can occur whilst you are receiving the bevacizumab drip in hospital. This can result in symptoms of a rash, sickness, dizziness, wheeze or shortness of breath. Before receiving bevacizumab all patients are given treatment to reduce the risk of a reaction occurring. If you develop an allergic reaction the drip will be stopped and treatment will be given to help the reaction settle.

- **Change in voice (hoarseness)**

Rare side effects (less than 1 in 100)

- **Very high blood pressure**

If your blood pressure becomes very high it can cause symptoms such as headaches, sleepiness, sickness, confusion and fits. If you experience these symptoms you should attend the nearest **Accident and Emergency department** for assessment.

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