



Aflibercept (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 Aflibercept. This treatment is given in combination with chemotherapy.

Day 1 Aflibercept by drip over 1 hour

Repeat every 2 weeks alongside chemotherapy.

You will have a routine blood tests, blood pressure and urine tests 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 to have your blood pressure checked regularly 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 reduce their blood pressure. Aflibercept may need to be stopped until your blood pressure is under control.

- **Protein in the urine**

This can occur due to effects of aflibercept 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 further tests to assess how well your kidneys are working. Aflibercept may be stopped until the protein found in the urine has resolved.

- **Change in voice (hoarseness)**

Uncommon side-effects (less than 1 in 10)

- **Increased risk of significant bleeding**

If you haven't had an operation to remove the area of bowel where your cancer started there is a risk that aflibercept could cause the cancer to bleed. Bleeding can sometimes be seen from other parts of the body. If you feel tired, weak, or dizzy, or have had changes in the colour of your motions you should contact The Christie Hotline immediately for advice.

- **Blood clots**

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

- **Allergic reaction**

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

- **Fistula formation**

Fistulae are abnormal, tube-shaped connections that can grow between internal organs and skin or other tissues.

Rare side effects (less than 1 in 100)

- **Very high blood pressure or effects on nervous system**

If your blood pressure becomes very high it can cause symptoms such as headaches, sleepiness, sickness and confusion. If you experience any of these symptoms you should contact The Christie Hotline immediately for advice.

- **Risk of bowel perforation**

There is a small risk that a small hole could form in the stomach, food pipe, gut or bowel and cause symptoms such as stomach pain, vomiting, fever, or chills. This can sometimes lead to death.

- **Slow wound healing**

Aflibercept 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 aflibercept.

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