



Kadcyla (Trastuzumab emtansine)

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.

Kadcyla is made up of two parts that are combined together:

- Trastuzumab (Herceptin) is a monoclonal antibody (targeted therapy)
- Emtansine (TDM1) is an anti-cancer drug, sometimes referred to as chemotherapy.

When Trastuzumab attaches to the Her2 protein it allows the Emtansine to go into the cancer cell. This drug then becomes active and kills the cancer cell. This action helps to stop the cancer growing or slows its growth.

Your treatment

Kadcyla is given into the vein (intravenously) through a fine tube (cannula) as an infusion every 3 weeks.

1st treatment – infused over 90 minutes followed by a 90 minute observational period.

Subsequent treatments – can be given over 30 minutes.

You will have a routine blood test before the start of each cycle of treatment. Occasionally we may not be able to go ahead with your treatment until your blood counts are back to a safe level. If this happens, your chemotherapy may be put back (deferred) a week.

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.

Please note:

If you are taking blood thinning medicine (such as warfarin or heparin), please tell your doctor or nurse clinician.

If you have ever had a serious reaction from using trastuzumab (Herceptin) with symptoms of flushing, chills, fever, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, rapid heart beat or drop in blood pressure, please tell your doctor or nurse clinician.

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)



- **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.

- **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.

- **Diarrhoea**

If this becomes a problem while you are having treatment, contact The Christie Hotline for advice. **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!**

- **Lethargy**

This treatment may make you feel tired and lacking in energy. It can be frustrating when you feel unable to cope with routine tasks. You may benefit from additional support during your treatment. Complementary therapies may be helpful. Speak to your nurse or doctor for further information. If necessary, take time off work. Gentle exercise, such as walking, can be beneficial.

- **Nausea and vomiting (sickness)**

Anti-sickness medication may be given along with your chemotherapy to prevent this. You will be given anti-sickness tablets to take at home. If you continue to feel or be sick, contact your GP or this hospital.

- **Joint and muscle pain**

Aches and pains can be experienced in the joints (arthralgia) and muscles (myalgia) during and post Kadcyła. The severity of this varies from person to person. It is important to inform the hospital and then appropriate painkillers can be prescribed.

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

This is due to the effect of the treatment on the nerves and is known as peripheral neuropathy. You may also notice that you have difficulty doing up buttons or similar tasks. Tell your doctor if you notice any numbness or tingling in your hands or feet. This usually improves a few months after treatment has finished although this may be permanent.

- **Liver problems**

This treatment can affect your liver function. This will be monitored through regular blood tests.

- **Flu-like symptoms**

Occasionally you may experience chills, fever or rhinitis (runny nose) one or two days after treatment. These symptoms can be reduced or controlled by taking medication such as paracetamol. Please monitor your temperature and contact the hospital if your temperature is 37.5°C or above or below 36°C or if you experience any symptoms of an infection.

- **Reactions**

Less commonly, people may experience an allergic reaction usually with the first or second cycle. This may involve headache, dizziness, rash, nausea or breathlessness. If any of these symptoms occur, call your nurse immediately. These symptoms are usually mild and temporary.

- **Bladder irritation**

This treatment may cause a burning sensation or irritation on passing urine because the treatment irritates the bladder wall. To prevent this drink a large glass of water both before and after treatment with Kadcyła. Also, try to pass urine as soon as the urge is felt. It is important that you continue to drink plenty of fluids during your course of treatment. Up to 2 litres a day is recommended. If you do have a burning sensation or irritation on passing urine, please contact the hospital straight away.

- **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.

- **Constipation**

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.

- **Headaches**

If you start to experience headaches on treatment, please discuss this with your doctor or nurse clinician.

- **Skin rash**

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

Uncommon side effects (less than 1 in 10)

- **PPE (palmar-plantar erythema)**

The skin on your hands and feet may become very dry, red and sore with some cracking. Tell your doctor as creams and tablets can be prescribed which can help. Your treatment dose may need to change. Try to keep your hands and feet cool and if possible, uncovered.

- **Heartburn**

This treatment can cause indigestion or reflux. If you experience this please contact The Christie Hotline. Heartburn can be treated with medication from your GP.

- **Effects on the heart**

Kadcyla can sometimes affect your heart function. We will assess your heart function by a MUGA scan or echocardiogram before you start your treatment and this will be repeated at 3-6 month intervals. If you experience any unusual shortness of breath, swelling of your ankles or a rapid heartbeat, please contact the hospital immediately.



- **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.

- **Sore eyes**

You may experience red or dry eyes. If this happens or persists, contact your GP or doctor at The Christie to discuss the use of eye drops.

- **Fluid retention**

This treatment can cause fluid retention, so that your hands and feet become swollen. This will be temporary but should you experience this contact your hospital doctor or nurse.

- **Strange taste**

This treatment can often leave a strange, metallic taste in your mouth. It can also make food seem tasteless and bland. Normal taste will usually come back after the treatment finishes. Ask the staff for dietary booklets which you may find helpful.

- **Changes to nails**

Your nails may become darker. White lines may appear on them. These changes grow out over a few months once the treatment has finished. Acrylic nails are not recommended.

- **Hair thinning**

You will not usually lose your hair with this chemotherapy but some people do have some thinning of their hair. Please remember that this is a temporary side effect and your hair will grow back normally when your treatment is completed. If you would like an appointment with the wig service, this can be arranged for you by visiting the Cancer information centre (department 7). A selection of headscarves and turbans is available from 'Headstart'.

Rare side effects (less than 1 in 100)

- **Pneumonitis (breathlessness)**

Some patients may experience a feeling of breathlessness, or develop a cough. If this happens please tell your doctor, or contact The Christie so that investigations and treatment can be undertaken.

- **Abdominal pains**

If this occurs – please contact The Christie Hotline for advice straightaway.

- **Infiltration**

This is when the treatment 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:

- Administration enquiries 0161 918 7606/7610
- Chemotherapy nurse: 0161 918 7171
- Clinical trials unit 0161 918 7663
- Breast care nurses 0161 446 3996

For advice ring The Christie Hotline on 0161 446 3658 (24 hours)

Your consultant is:

Your hospital number is:

Your key worker is:



The Christie Patient Information Service July 2014
CHR/CT/1030/16.06.14 Version 1 Review date: July 2017

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