



Bortezomib (Lymphoma)

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. 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 therapy for your lymphoma called: [bortezomib](#).

This will be given in cycles. Each cycle lasts 21 days.

[Bortezomib](#) is given subcutaneously (under the skin) and belongs to a new class of drug called **proteasome inhibitors**. This is given on days 1, 4, 8 & 11 with a 10 day rest period. It is important to drink plenty of fluids when having this therapy as it can affect the kidney function.

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.

- **If you are taking any other medicines:** It is important to tell the doctor if you are taking medicine for any other condition. Some medicines can react with your treatment. So always tell your doctor at every visit about any other medicines or tablets you are taking.

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.

Tumour Lysis Syndrome

Rarely 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.

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)

- **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.

- **Low white cell count**

There is a risk of infection or shingles.

- **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.

- **Peripheral neuropathy (tingling & numbness in toes or fingers)**

Bortezomib can cause nerve damage. This causes numbness or pins and needles in your fingers or toes and muscle cramps and weakness in the legs. ***It is important to tell us if this happens*** as the dose of the bortezomib may have to be reduced or temporarily stopped, or in more severe cases, discontinued. The peripheral neuropathy is usually temporary, but can last for some time. However, it can become permanent, so please report these symptoms your doctor or nurse specialist.

- **Gastro-intestinal disturbance**

This treatment can cause indigestion, constipation, diarrhoea, nausea, abdominal pain and an increase or decrease in appetite and weight. It is important to drink plenty of fluids and maintain a balanced diet. Please report to your nurse or doctor if you develop any of these symptoms. If you have abdominal pain with nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea, contact The Hotline immediately. You may be given medication to help with any of these side effects.

- **Fatigue**

Fatigue is quite common whilst receiving bortezomib. The fatigue may be a result of anaemia (a low red blood cell count) which can be managed with blood transfusions. It can also be managed through rest, good diet, drinking plenty of fluids and regular gentle exercise.

- **Changes to blood pressure**

Bortezomib can cause changes to your blood pressure. If you have a history of hypotension (low blood pressure) or are on drugs to help lower your blood pressure, you may need to have your medication altered while you are having bortezomib therapy. Drinking plenty of fluids can help to prevent hypotension. Please tell your nurse or doctor if you have experienced dizziness or faints.

- **Skin rashes**

Some people can get a rash when receiving bortezomib. The rash may be itchy and need treatment with antihistamines and/or steroid creams. If it is very troublesome, bortezomib may need to be stopped temporarily and restarted at a lower dose. Itchy and/or dry skin can also occur with this treatment.

Uncommon side effects (less than 1 in 10)

- **Mood disturbance/altered sleep pattern**

This treatment can affect your mood. Speak to your doctor or nurse if you or your family notice mood changes or changes to your sleep pattern.

- **Eye changes**

This treatment can cause eye swelling, changes to vision and/or infection in the eye (conjunctivitis). Contact your doctor or nurse if you experience any of these symptoms.

- **Shortness of breath/cough**

Although this is not common, this treatment can cause shortness of breath or a cough. Contact your doctor or nurse if you experience either of these symptoms or if you feel unwell with a fever and these symptoms contact The Hotline without delay.

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.

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)



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