

## Vyxeos

The possible benefits of this treatment vary; for some people it may reduce the risk of the cancer coming back, for others it may control the cancer and its symptoms. 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 has suggested a treatment called Vyxeos - this belongs to a group of medicines called antineoplastics. Vyxeos contains two active substances, called daunorubicin and cytarabine, in the form of tiny particles known as 'liposomes'.

Vyxeos is used to treat patients with newly diagnosed acute myeloid leukaemia (a cancer of the white blood cells). It is given when the leukaemia was caused by previous treatments (known as therapy related acute myeloid leukaemia) or when there are certain changes in the bone marrow (known as acute myeloid leukaemia with 'myelodysplasia-related changes')

Vyxeos is given to you as a drip (infusion) into a vein, over one and a half hours (90 minutes).

In your first cycle, you will have an infusion on days 1, 3, and 5.

On further cycles - you will have an infusion on days 1 and 3. This can be repeated if necessary.

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 passing urine, cough or breathlessness. We recommend that you use a thermometer so you can check your temperature. You can buy one from your local chemist.

If your temperature is 37.5°C or above, or below 36°C or you have symptoms of an infection, contact The Christie Hotline straight away.



## Flu vaccinations

### Is it alright for me to have a flu jab during the time I'm having chemotherapy?

It's safe to have a flu jab, but depending on the sort of chemotherapy you have had, it may not give quite as much protection against infection as usual. Some patients may need two vaccinations. However, if you're thinking of having any other vaccinations, do check with your Christie doctor first, because some vaccines should be avoided.

## Possible side effects

Chemotherapy can cause many different side effects. Some are more likely to occur than others. We are all different, so we may get different side effects with varying severity. 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.

## Very common side effects (more than 1 in 10)

- **Low white blood cell count**

There is a risk of infection and shingles

- **Bruising or bleeding**

This treatment can reduce the production of platelets which help the blood to clot. Tell your doctor if you have unexplained bruising or bleeding, such as nosebleeds, bloodspots or rashes on the skin and bleeding gums. You may need a platelet infusion.

- **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.

- **Rash**

Body rash or a rash on your hands and feet. Ask your doctor or nurse for advice if this becomes troublesome.

- **Gastrointestinal disturbance**

This treatment can cause constipation, diarrhoea, nausea, an increase or decrease in weight. It is important to drink plenty of fluid and maintain a balanced diet. Please report any of these symptoms to your nurse or doctor.

- **Cardiac disorders**

Vyxeos can also cause heart problems or worsen pre-existing heart conditions and you will have a comprehensive medical assessment, prior to starting treatment with Vyxeos. You will be monitored carefully during treatment, which will include blood pressure monitoring and fluid management.

- **Aches and pains**

Vyxeos may cause muscular aches and pains. A simple painkiller such as paracetamol may help with this. If you find that symptoms are persistent or unmanageable then speak to your doctor.

## **Common (more than 1 in 10 people):**

- Stomach cramps or excessive gas.
- Excessive sweating at night.
- Hair loss – although frequency and severity is much less than comparative regimens.

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

- Numbness in the hands and feet.

**The following symptoms require medical attention, but are not an emergency. Contact your health care provider within 24 hours of noticing any of the following:**

- Nausea (interferes with ability to eat and unrelieved with prescribed medication).
- Vomiting (vomiting more than 4-5 times in a 24 hour period).
- Diarrhoea (4-6 episodes in a 24 hour period).
- Constipation unrelieved by laxative use.
- Extreme fatigue (unable to carry on self-care activities).
- Mouth sores (painful redness, swelling and ulcers).
- Yellowing of the skin or eyes.
- Swelling of the feet or ankles.
- Sudden weight gain.
- Signs of infection such as redness or swelling, pain on swallowing, coughing up mucus, or painful urination.
- Unable to eat or drink for 24 hours or have signs of dehydration: tiredness, thirst, dry mouth, dark and decreased amounts of urine, or dizziness.

## **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.

## Sex, contraception and 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 and for at least 6 months post the last dose of Vyxeos. 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.

## Contacts

If you have any general questions or concerns about your treatment, please contact the Haematology Team.

- Lisa Jeffrey, Emma Whitham and Decima Govett, Haematology Clinical Nurse Specialists **0161 918 7962**
- Haematology and Transplant day unit **0161 446 3924**
- General enquiries **0161 446 3000**
- For urgent advice ring The Christie Hotline **0161 446 3658 (24 hours)**

Your consultant is: .....

Your hospital number is: .....

Your key worker is: .....

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For information and advice visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham or Salford. Opening times can vary, please check before making a special journey.



Contact The Christie Hotline for  
urgent support and specialist advice  
**The Christie Hotline: 0161 446 3658**  
Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week