

## Breast Oncology

# Paclitaxel and trastuzumab (PH)

*This leaflet is given in addition to your consent form(s) and booklet, 'Chemotherapy - a guide for patients and their carers'.*

## Your treatment

**Paclitaxel** is an anti-cancer drug also known as chemotherapy. Paclitaxel is given into the vein (intravenously) through a fine tube (cannula) as an infusion (drip) over 1 hour on day 1, 8 and 15. This is called one cycle of treatment and is repeated every 21 days, usually for 4- 6 cycles at the discretion of the treating consultant.

**Trastuzumab** (HER2 therapy) is given as an injection under the skin (subcutaneous) every 21 days in combination with paclitaxel. Your HER2 directed therapy will then continue every 21 days beyond the chemotherapy. The recommended length of HER2 directed treatment will depend on your type of breast cancer.

You will have a routine blood test before the start of each 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 delayed a week.

You may be advised to have a line fitted or an implantable/subcutaneous port (portacath) to aid the delivery of your intravenous treatment. This will be organised by the clinic if it is required. Please ask your team for further information. Your **line or port needs to be removed** after all your intravenous treatments have finished. If you have not received an appointment for this, please contact the procedure team on **0161 446 3916**.

This treatment can have serious or possibly life-threatening side effects. It is very important that you report side effects straight away.

You are also 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 on 0161 446 3658 (open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week).**



## Possible side effects

See the Cancer Research UK consent form.

You should have been given a copy of this consent form before you started treatment but it can also be found by visiting [www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org) and searching 'Consent forms for SACT (Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy)'.

See 'Chemotherapy - a guide for patients and their carers'.

You should have been given a copy of this booklet. You can also see this on The Christie website, visit [www.christie.nhs.uk](http://www.christie.nhs.uk).

## Contacts

If you have any general questions or concerns about your treatment, please ring the service under which you are being treated.

Administration enquiries	<b>0161 918 7606/7610</b>
Chemotherapy nurse	<b>0161 918 7171</b>
Clinical trials unit	<b>0161 918 7663</b>

If you need the adjuvant HER2 therapy service, please contact:

Email: [the-christie.adjuvant.herceptin@nhs.net](mailto:the-christie.adjuvant.herceptin@nhs.net)

Telephone: **0161 446 8001**

If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

The Christie is committed to producing high quality, evidence based information for patients. Our patient information adheres to the principles and quality statements of the Information Standard. If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact [\*\*the-christie.patient.information@nhs.net\*\*](mailto:the-christie.patient.information@nhs.net)

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



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urgent support and specialist advice  
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