

Carboplatin (Neuro-oncology)

The possible benefits of treatment vary; for some people this chemotherapy 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 or nurse clinician has prescribed for you treatment with carboplatin chemotherapy.

The chemotherapy is given into a vein via a drip over 1 hour.

The treatment is repeated every 3-4 weeks usually for total of 6 cycles, but the length of treatment will depend on how you are coping with the chemotherapy and its effects.

You will have a routine blood test and be reviewed in clinic by a member of the neuro-oncology team 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 delayed a week or until your blood counts have recovered.

Carboplatin chemotherapy may be given in combination with another type of chemotherapy.

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.

Kidney function

It is important to monitor how your kidneys are working while you are having treatment. We can do this by checking your blood results or we may ask you to attend for a type of scan which measures kidney function (GFR test).



Flu vaccination

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

Common side effects (more than 1 in 10)

- **Increased risk of serious infection (Warning!)**

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.

- **Anaemia (low number of red blood cells) (Warning!)**

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.

- **Nausea and vomiting (sickness)**

The severity of this varies from person to person. To prevent this you will be given anti-sickness medication at least 30 minutes before your chemotherapy. You will also be prescribed regular anti-sickness medication to take for 2 days after your chemotherapy. If you continue to feel or be sick, contact your GP or this hospital, as your anti-sickness medication may need to be changed or increased.

- **Lethargy**

Some chemotherapy may make you feel tired and lacking in energy. It can be frustrating when you feel unable to cope with routine tasks. If you do feel tired, take rest and get help with household chores. If necessary, take time off work. Gentle exercise such as walking can be beneficial.

- **Constipation**

Try to drink plenty of fluids. Report this to your hospital doctor or nurse who can advise you regarding diet and 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.

- **Hair thinning**

Some hair loss may occur during treatment, including body and facial hair. It is advisable to avoid perms, colours, use of hot brushes and vigorous frequent washing that could increase hair loss. Please remember that this is a temporary side effect and your hair will grow back when your treatment is completed. Very rarely, hair loss may be permanent.

The cancer information centre offers a coping with hair loss service to all patients where support, information and advice will be given. Drop in, contact **0161 446 8100** or email informationcentre@christie.nhs.uk. Information about the wig service can also be found here and vouchers for wigs can also be obtained for eligible patients. The wig room provides a drop in service, please see The Christie leaflet 'The wig fitting service' for further information.

The Maggie's Centre runs a Talking Heads hair loss support workshop for anyone who is anticipating or

experiencing hair loss (both men and women). These sessions cover the practicalities of hair loss as well as offering support with its emotional impact. Contact Maggie's on **0161 641 4848** or email manchester@maggiescentres.org.

Uncommon side effects (less than 1 in 10)

- **Bruising or bleeding (Warning!)**

This treatment can reduce the production of platelets which helps 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.

Rare side effects (less than 1 in 100)

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

This is uncommon. It is usually only mild and temporary but it can gradually build up during the treatment course and occasionally become permanent. Please report these symptoms to your doctor on your next hospital visit.

- **Tinnitus and high frequency hearing loss**

You may develop tinnitus (ringing in the ears), this sensation should subside when your treatment finishes. High frequency hearing loss can occur with this chemotherapy. Rarely, this may be permanent.

- **Immediate allergic reactions (Warning!)**

Allergic reactions to carboplatin are uncommon. Please ask the staff for help immediately if you notice any of the following: fevers and chills, back pain, shortness of breath, headaches and swelling of the face may occur during the time the drug is being given. If this happens please tell the staff straight away. Your doctor may prescribe further medication that can help to reduce these side effects.

- **Extravasation (when chemotherapy leaks outside the vein)**

Extravasation is when chemotherapy leaks outside the vein. If you develop redness, soreness or pain at the injection site at any time please let us know straight away. If you feel pain, tell your doctor or nurse as they can slow the drip to reduce the reaction.

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.

Other medicines

Some medicines can be harmful to take when you are having chemotherapy. Let your doctor know about any medications you are taking, including non-prescribed medicines such as complementary therapies and herbal remedies.

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. 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.

Loss of periods Due to the effects of chemotherapy on the ovaries you may find that your periods become irregular or may eventually stop. In younger women this may be temporary, but if you are closer to your menopause it may be permanent. This will result in hot flushes, sweats and vaginal dryness. Please contact your specialist nurse if you would like advice about managing these symptoms.

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:

Neuro-oncology clinical nurse specialist - **0161 446 8441**

Your consultant's secretary:

Dr McBain - **0161 918 7008**

Dr Borst /Dr Milanovic - **0161 446 3362**

Dr Colaco/Dr Whitfield/Dr Kennedy - **0161 918 7197**

Administration enquiries - **0161 918 7606/7610**

Chemotherapy nurse - **0161 918 7171**

Your consultant is:

Your hospital number is:

Your key worker is:

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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**

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