



Vincristine, doxorubicin, cyclophosphamide and ifosfamide and etoposide (VDC IE)

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 will explain 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

You will have 14 cycles of treatment every 2 weeks alternating between VDC and IE. From cycle 11 onwards doxorubicin will be stopped.

For this regime you will be connected to a drip continuously for approximately 18 hours.

VDC

Day 1

Vincristine given by an intravenous (IV) injection.

Doxorubicin via an IV infusion over 4 hours. Cyclophosphamide and mesna via an IV infusion over 4 hours followed by mesna via an IV infusion over 8 hours.

Day 2

Doxorubicin via an IV infusion over 4 hours.

IE

Every day (days 1 to 5)

Etoposide via an IV infusion over 1 hour.

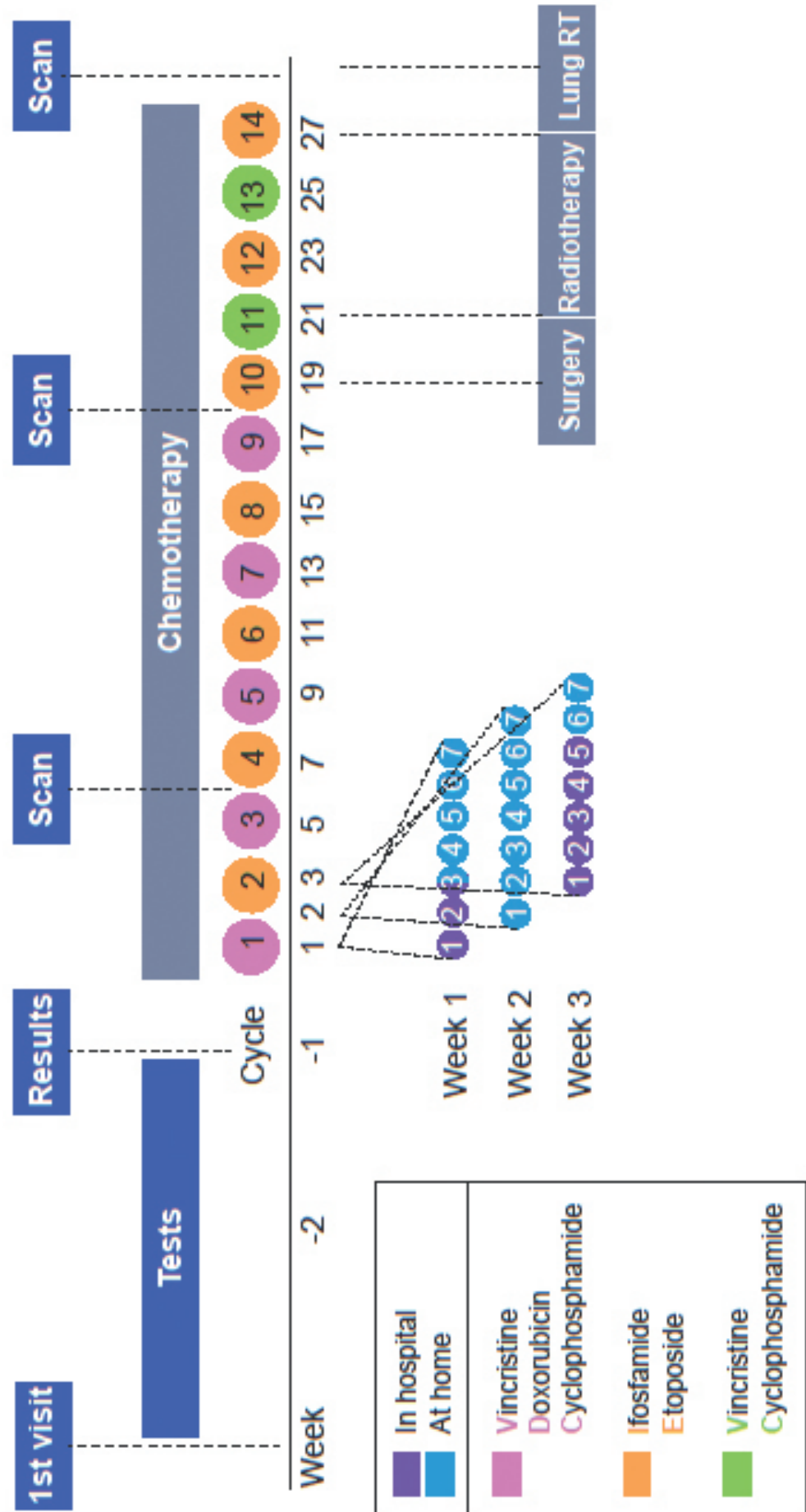
Ifosfamide and mesna via an IV infusion over 1 hour.

Mesna via continuous IV infusions. You will be connected to a drip for approximately 13 hours per day which also includes the treatments above.

This regimen is completed when the mesna infusion on day 5 finishes.

You will have a routine blood test before the start of each cycle of treatment. Also, we will ask you to have routine heart and kidney function tests before starting this treatment. You will have scans before starting this treatment and also once your treatment is completed.

VDC IE 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.

Flu vaccinations

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

It's safe to have a flu jab but depending on the sort of treatment you have had, it may not give quite as much protection against infection as usual. Some patients may need 2 vaccinations. However, if you're thinking of having any other vaccinations, do check with your Christie doctor first, because some vaccines should be avoided.

COVID-19 vaccinations

We advise that all patients receive a COVID-19 vaccination when this is offered. Your doctor will discuss with you the best time to have this.

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.

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.

In addition to support your immune system you will receive daily injections of GCSF for 5 days underneath your skin to start 24 hours after you have completed the chemotherapy inpatient stay.

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.

Other side effects

Common side effects (more than 1 in 10)

- **Urine discolouration**

Due to its red colour, Doxorubicin may discolour your urine red or pink for up to 28 to 48 hours following treatment.

- **Nausea and vomiting**

The severity of this varies from person to person. Anti-sickness medication may be given along with your chemotherapy to prevent this. You may also be given anti-sickness tablets to take home. If you continue to feel or be sick contact your GP or this hospital because your anti-sickness medication may need to be changed or increased.

- **Loss of appetite**

A dietitian or specialist nurse at your hospital can give advice and tips on boosting appetite, coping with eating difficulties and maintaining weight.

- **Taste changes**

You may notice that your food tastes different. Normal taste will usually come back after the treatment finishes.

- **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.

- **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.

- **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, rest as often as you need to. If necessary take time off work, school or college. Gentle exercise such as walking can be beneficial.

- **Irritation to the brain**

Ifosfamide can cause irritation to the brain. You may notice vivid dreams while you are on the drip (while the chemotherapy is actually being given). Sometimes people get very drowsy and sleepy or may have visual hallucinations. Please tell the nurse if you begin to feel any of these symptoms.

These symptoms usually quickly go away if the drip is stopped and there are not any permanent side effects. However, rarely, ifosfamide can cause a loss of consciousness which can last for several days. Your doctor or nurse can give you more information about this.

- **Hair loss**

Hair loss is usually total. The hair falls out gradually 10-14 days following your first course of treatment, but it varies from person to person. Please remember that this is a temporary side effect and your hair will grow back when your treatment is completed. Very rarely, hair loss can be permanent. If you would like an appointment with The Christie wig service can be arranged for you. Please ask staff for a copy of the information leaflet: 'The wig fitting service'.

- **Skin and nail changes**

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

Your skin may also appear darker in colour or lightly tanned, especially around the joints. This is known as hyperpigmentation. Asian and Afro-Caribbean people may develop noticeable light patches on their skin. The skin will turn to normal when treatment is finished.

Your skin will tan or burn in the sun more easily. Sit in the shade, avoid too much sun and use sunblock cream and wear a hat.

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

This is usually only mild and temporary. Please report these symptoms to your doctor on your next hospital visit. Rarely, this may be permanent.

Uncommon side effects (less than 1 in 10)

- **Constipation**

This occasionally occurs with the drug vincristine. It is important to drink plenty of fluids and eat foods high in fibre. If you feel constipated tell your 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.

- **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 nose bleeds, bloodspots or rashes on the skin, and bleeding gums. You may need a platelet transfusion.

- **Diarrhoea**

This can usually be controlled with medicine; but tell your doctor if it is severe or if it continues. It is important to drink plenty of fluids if you have diarrhoea.

- **Weakness of the heart**

Doxorubicin can affect your heart. It can weaken the heart muscle. This is uncommon and is associated with increasing the dose of the treatment. Your treatment will not exceed the maximum dose. If there is any concern about your heart, a scan of the heart will be done before the start of your treatment.

- **Bladder irritation**

Ifosfamide may cause a burning sensation or irritation on passing urine because the chemotherapy irritates the bladder wall. You will receive a drug called Mesna with you chemotherapy to help prevent this side effect. Try to drink plenty of fluids throughout the treatment and pass urine as soon as the urge is felt. If you have a burning sensation or irritation on passing urine, please tell your doctor at The Christie.

- **Sleeplessness and headaches**

These effects are very rare but it is important to let your doctor know straightaway.

- **Allergic reaction**

Signs of an allergic reaction include skin rashes and itching, a high temperature, shivering, a red face, dizziness, breathlessness, anxiety and a desire to pass urine. You will be monitored for any signs of an allergic reaction during treatment but it is a rare side effect.

Rare side effects (less than 1 in 100)

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.

- **Herbal medicine**

Some herbal medicine including St John's Wort can affect the chemotherapy. You should let your doctor or nurse know if you are taking any herbal medication, complementary or alternative medicines, including vitamins, minerals and medicines purchased over-the-counter.

Sex, contraception and fertility

Protecting your partner and contraception: We recommend that you or your partner use a barrier form of contraception 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 an increased chance 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.

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Contacts

If you have any general questions or concerns about your treatment, please ring:

Administrative enquiries	0161 918 7606 / 7653
Sarcoma clinical nurse specialist	0161 446 3094
Sarcoma research office	0161 918 7355 / 7098
Chemotherapy nurse	0161 918 7171
Palatine treatment ward	0161 446 3960

For urgent advice ring The Christie Hotline on **0161 446 3658** (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

Your consultant is:.....

Your hospital number is:.....

Your key worker is:.....

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, Salford or Macclesfield. 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