

## Cemiplimab (Libtayo®)

Cemiplimab (Libtayo®) is a type of anti-cancer treatment called immunotherapy. The possible benefits of this treatment vary; for some people, this immune therapy may reduce the risk of the cancer coming back, for others, it may control the cancer and its symptoms. Your treatment will be fully explained by your doctor or nurse who will be happy to answer any questions.

### Your treatment

Your doctor or nurse clinician has prescribed for you an immune therapy called cemiplimab (Libtayo®).

The treatment is usually given once every 3 weeks for up to 2 years, as long as you are getting a benefit.

The treatment is given via an infusion (drip) over 30 minutes. You will usually be seen by a doctor or nurse clinician and have a routine blood test before the start of each cycle of treatment.

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.

### If you are taking any other medicines:

Please tell your doctor if you are taking medicines for any other condition.

Some medicines can react/interfere with cemiplimab, so always tell your doctor about any other medicines you are taking. **Make sure your doctor knows if you:**

- have any auto immune disease
- have had any inflammation of the lungs (pneumonitis), HIV or hepatitis

### Infusion related reactions

Occasionally side effects can occur while you are having the infusion. These may include chills, fever and shivering. If you have any of these side effects please tell your nurse straight away, even though your progress will be monitored regularly.

Rarely, you may also develop a skin rash, headache, sore throat or sickness. If this happens or you notice any swelling around the eyes and face, feel dizzy or faint, or have any shortness of breath during the treatment, please tell the nurse or doctor immediately. This may be an allergic reaction and the drip may need to be slowed down or stopped. You may feel tired or have a headache. These symptoms are related to your treatment and usually resolve when the infusion has finished.

If you do have any reactions to your treatment, we may be able to give you medication to prevent this on your next infusion.



## Possible side effects

Many patients do not get any side effects with cemiplimab. If side effects do occur, for most patients they are mild and can be safely managed at home. The most common side effects are related to the way that the drug treats the cancer by boosting the immune system. They are generally different from the side effects which occur following chemotherapy. Some are more likely to occur than others. We are all different, so we may get different side effects with varying severity. Most, if not all, more severe side effects can be controlled through the use of steroid medications either as tablets or through a drip. Hospital admission may be needed for severe immune related reactions.

Immunotherapy treatments such as cemiplimab can cause a wide range of side effects. It is therefore very important if you are admitted to another hospital or see another doctor that they are aware of you have had cemiplimab. Immunotherapy side effects can also occur several months after stopping the treatment. Healthcare professionals from outside The Christie are aware they can contact us at any time for advice.

## Common side effects (more than 1 in 10)

### • Fatigue

Cemiplimab 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. **IF YOU EXPERIENCE PROFOUND TIREDNESS**, when you do not feel able to get out of bed or feel dizzy or faint, contact The Christie Hotline on **0161 446 3658**. This may be related to inflammation of the hormone-producing glands (see below) and could require urgent assessment.

### • Skin rash or itch

This can vary from mild to severe. Contact The Christie Hotline on **0161 446 3658** or your medical team if the rash covers more than half of your body, if it is very itchy or painful, if you develop blisters or peeling skin, or if you have sores in your mouth.

### • Diarrhoea

If diarrhoea occurs you should take loperamide. Take 2 capsules as soon as the first liquid stool occurs. Then take 1 capsule with each liquid stool up to a maximum of 8 in 24 hours. If you continue to have more than 3 liquid stools a day, if you are having diarrhoea at night or if the diarrhoea continues for more than 3 days contact The Christie Hotline number on **0161 446 3658** for advice. You should also contact The Hotline if you have any blood or mucus in your stools, or they become a darker colour.

If you develop any tenderness or pain in your abdomen, ring The Christie Hotline on **0161 446 3658**.

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

### • Inflammation of the liver

We will be checking your liver blood tests before each infusion but contact The Christie if you develop yellowing of the skin or eyes (jaundice) have very dark urine or pain on the right side of your stomach.

### • Immune-related kidney problems

This is caused when the kidneys become inflamed and can stop working properly. We will be monitoring your kidney function carefully but contact the hotline if you find that you are very tired or if you notice that you are passing less urine than usual.

- **Inflammation of the hormone producing glands**

Sometimes cemiplimab may cause inflammation of the glands that produce vital hormones (especially the pituitary, adrenal and thyroid glands) which in turn can affect the way they work. Contact The Christie if you develop any of the following; headaches, blurred or double vision, profound tiredness, decreased sexual drive or if you become irritable or forgetful.

Cemiplimab can also cause development of type 1 diabetes. This results in a high blood sugar which can cause symptoms including feeling more hungry or thirsty than usual, needing to urinate more often, weight loss and tiredness. Your blood glucose will be monitored during your treatment but if you develop these symptoms please contact The Christie.

- **Inflammation of the lungs**

Uncommonly cemiplimab can cause inflammation of the lungs. This usually does not cause symptoms, and may be seen on routine scans. If you develop shortness of breath or a cough contact The Christie Hotline.

- **Sore mouth**

This can range from mild to severe. If you develop pain which affects your ability to eat and drink or any ulcers in the mouth please contact The Christie.

- **Muscle and joint pains**

Sometimes cemiplimab can cause muscle and joint pain. If this does not respond to simple pain relief such as paracetamol please contact The Christie.

## **Rare side effects (less than 1 in 100)**

- **Inflammation of the nerves**

Contact the hospital if you develop muscle weakness, numbness or tingling in your hands or feet or any dizziness or loss of consciousness.

- **Inflammation of the eyes**

Sometimes cemiplimab can cause the eyes to become inflamed. Contact The Christie if you develop any redness or pain in your eye or you develop any problems with your vision.

- **Inflammation of the bowel leading to bowel perforation**

Rarely the bowel can become very inflamed and this can lead to a small hole developing in the wall of the bowel (perforation). You will be closely monitored for this but if you develop diarrhoea as described above, any abdominal pain or blood or mucus in the stools, contact The Christie Hotline on **0161 446 3658** immediately.

- **Inflammation of the heart muscle**

Rarely the heart muscle or its covering (the pericardium) can become inflamed. If you develop chest pain please contact The Christie Hotline, if the pain is severe please dial **999**.

## **Serious and potentially life threatening side effects**

In a small proportion of patients immunotherapy 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.

## Sex, contraception and fertility

It is important that you do not get pregnant or attempt to get someone pregnant while on immunotherapy.

There is evidence that these drugs can affect the unborn child. It is important that you use effective birth control for as long as you are on the treatment and for **at least 4 months after**.

Women should stop breastfeeding while being treated with cemiplimab since it is unknown if the medication is excreted through breast milk.

## Fertility

We do not know if cemiplimab affects fertility.

## Late side effects

Long term possible side effects of treatment with cemiplimab are not yet known. Speak with your doctor if you wish to discuss this further.

## 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 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.

## Contacts

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

Administration enquiries **0161 918 7606/7610**

Chemotherapy nurse: **0161 918 7171**

For 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: .....

Notes:

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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, 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