

### Warning

This fact sheet aims to let you know the side effects most commonly seen following the administration of your treatment. Please note that when you take any medication, there is a possibility that it causes rare side effects and it is difficult to predict which patients will be affected.

## General information for patient High dose cytarabine (*HIDAC*)

**Date:** June 12<sup>th</sup> 2015

**Revision date:** June 12<sup>th</sup> 2015

Medication	Administration
Cytarabine	Intravenous infusion over 3 hours every 12 hours, on days 1, 3 and 5 (total of 6 doses)
<i>Cycle can be repeated every 28 days</i>	

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## General Information associated with your treatment

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- › This medication is used to prevent the multiplication of abnormal cells and destroy them.
- › **Blood tests** will be done regularly throughout the cycle of chemotherapy. Depending on their results and side effects of the previous treatment, the dose of the medication might be adjusted or the treatment might be delayed.
- › You may experience **fatigue** during your treatments. This is usually only temporary and may be related to different reasons (medication, stress, the disease). Maintain a good level of activity but rest when you feel the need to.
- › Your **appetite may diminish**. Eat more often, in smaller quantities.
- › Your **sense of taste may be altered**. Enhance foods with *fines herbes* or lemon juice. Eating fruits and non sugared candies, chewing non-sugared gums, etc., may mask the metallic taste.
- › **Alcohol** (in small quantities) is permitted and will not affect the efficacy of the treatments.
- › You can have an **active sexual** life during your treatments. Your partner will not be exposed to, nor harmed by chemotherapy effects. However, a decrease in your sexual drive may occur during this period. This may also be influenced by different factors (fatigue, stress etc.)
- › For **male patients**, the sperm count may be affected and negative effects on the embryo may occur. In fact, the production of spermatozooids may be reduced or completely absent during treatments. In certain patients, this reduction of fertility may be permanent, may get better or return to normal after the treatments have stopped. This reduction of **fertility** does not prevent erection or sexual activity. A pregnancy remains possible. If you have sex with a woman of childbearing age it is strongly recommended to use a method of contraception during the treatment.
- › In **pre-menopausal female patients** chemotherapy may cause irregularities or cessation of the **menstrual cycle** during treatment. It may restart or return to normal after the end of treatment. The menstrual cycle may also stop permanently. However, a pregnancy remains possible and chemotherapy administered during pregnancy may harm the embryo. A birth control method is strongly recommended during treatment. Breast-feeding is contra-indicated during treatment.
- › Consult your doctor or pharmacist before you take other medications (even over the counter medications available without a prescription) or natural health products. These may provoke an interaction with your treatment and diminish its efficacy or increase side effects.
- › Follow the instructions given by your cancer center about the right way to handle and dispose of biological fluids (for example urine, stools) in order to protect the environment and your relatives.

Be sure to always have on hand the complete list of your medications, dietary supplements, vitamins and other natural health products. Give it to your doctor and your pharmacist. It is important to make them aware of any change.

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## Adverse effects and their management

Adverse effects	Management
Significant <b>nausea and vomiting</b> may occur mainly on the same day and the day following your treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› You will be prescribed medication to prevent nausea to be taken prior to treatment. At home, you will take medication on a regular basis during 1 or 2 days following your treatment, depending on your need.</li><li>› Communicate with a member of your healthcare team if the nausea or vomiting is not relieved by your medication.</li></ul>
Usually, a <b>total hair loss</b> will occur. In general this may happen 2 to 3 weeks after the start of the treatment. However, don't worry; your hair should grow back after treatments have ended.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Use a gentle shampoo.</li></ul>
A decrease in the <b>white blood cells</b> will occur about 1 to 3 weeks following treatment. You may be at higher risk of infections during your treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Wash your hands often.</li><li>› During this period, avoid coming into contact with people who have contagious diseases.</li><li>› Contact a member of your healthcare team quickly if you notice any signs of infection (fever, chills, cough, sore throat, pain while urinating...).</li><li>› Consult your doctor or go immediately to the Emergency Room if you have a fever 38,3 °C (101 °F) once or 38 °C (100.4 °F) twice an hour apart.</li><li>› In case of fever, do not take acetaminophen (ex: Tylenol<sup>®</sup>, Atasol<sup>®</sup>) and anti-inflammatory medication (ex : Motrin<sup>®</sup>, Advil<sup>®</sup>).</li></ul>

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A decrease in <b>platelets</b> will occur about 2 to 3 weeks following treatment. You may bruise or bleed more easily than you normally do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Use a tooth brush with soft bristles.</li><li>› Check with your pharmacist before taking medications with Aspirin<sup>®</sup>, ibuprofen or other anti-inflammatory drugs.</li><li>› Contact a member of your healthcare team if you bruise more easily than you normally do or if you have a tendency to bleed easily from the nose or the gums.</li><li>› You will have blood tests prescribed. A blood transfusion may be needed.</li></ul>
You may experience a decrease in <b>red blood cells</b> following your treatment. This phenomenon is called <b>anemia</b> and is characterized by signs of fatigue, pale color, dizziness and shortness of breath.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Keep active but respect signs of fatigue your body gives you; rest when you feel the need to.</li><li>› If you notice one or any of these effects, contact a member of your healthcare team.</li></ul>
<b>Ulcers in the mouth</b> and the throat may appear approximately 7 to 10 days the start of your treatment. They may also appear in the throat.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Gently and regularly brush your teeth after each meal and at bedtime.</li><li>› Rinse your mouth with a solution of water and salt with or without baking soda. Gargle 4 times a day – after every meal and at bedtime. Do not drink or eat for one hour after you gargle.</li><li>› Mouthwashes <b>without alcohol</b> found in stores are a good alternative.</li><li>› If you notice ulcers, redness or painful areas in your mouth, contact a member of your healthcare team.</li></ul>
You may experience <b>irritation</b> with or without <b>redness</b> and <b>swelling</b> in your <b>eyes</b> , <b>excessive tearing</b> , <b>foreign body sensation</b> and sometimes <b>intolerance to light</b> and <b>blurred vision</b> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Eye drops will be prescribed to prevent these effects.</li><li>› If you are wearing contact lenses, avoid wearing them when using the eye drops.</li><li>› If you notice one or any of these effects, inform a member of your healthcare team.</li></ul>

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You may experience numbness or tingling in your hands and feet with or without redness and swelling. This is called <b>hand and foot syndrome</b> and is rarely painful.	<b>To prevent this syndrome:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Avoid wearing tight clothes or shoes. Wear absorbent sponge rubber soles, and/or gel pads to relieve pressure points.</li><li>› Pat dry your hands and feet rather than rubbing them.</li><li>› Wear light clothing or keep skin free of clothing to avoid perspiring.</li><li>› Wear rubber gloves while washing dishes.</li><li>› Wash your hands and feet in lukewarm water; avoid hot water.</li><li>› Moisturize your skin regularly using a non perfumed emollient and thick cream.</li><li>› Avoid activities that require applying pressure and repetitive friction on your hands and feet.</li><li>› Avoid sun exposure.</li><li>› Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen (SPF of 30 or more).</li><li>› Wear a hat if you go outside.</li></ul>
Your may develop a <b>skin rash</b> with or without itchiness following your treatment.	
Your skin may become more <b>sensitive to the sun</b> .	<b>If symptoms occur:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› If these symptoms occur and affect your daily activities, notify a member of your healthcare team who will recommend appropriate measures.</li></ul>

Rare adverse effects that can be severe or serious to communicate quickly to your doctor	
This medication may cause <b>severe headaches, difficulty talking, loss of coordination of muscles, involuntary eye movements, drowsiness, confusion, hallucinations and convulsions.</b>	› Communicate immediately with a member of your health care team or go immediately to Emergency Room.
If you experience <b>cough</b> and/or <b>persistent fever</b> with <b>sudden difficulty breathing.</b>	› Communicate immediately with a member of your health care team or go immediately to Emergency Room.

Pharmacist: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ h to \_\_\_\_\_ h (Monday to Friday)