

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 DA-EPOCH-R

Date: December 11th 2015

Revision date: December 11th 2015

Medication	Administration
Rituximab	Intravenous infusion over a few hours on day 1
Prednisone	Tablets to be taken by mouth twice a day with food, for 5 days (on days 1 to 5)
Vincristine Doxorubicine Etoposide	Intravenous infusion over 96 hours starting on day 1
Cyclophosphamide	Intravenous infusion over 30 minutes on day 5
<i>Cycle repeated every 3 weeks</i>	

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General Information associated with your treatment

- › These medications are used to prevent the multiplication of abnormal cells and destroy them.
- › A **blood test** will be done prior regularly. Depending on the 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 *finer 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. The menstrual cycle 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.
- › 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.
- › 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.

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Adverse effects and their management

Adverse effects	Management
Significant nausea and vomiting may occur during your treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› You will be prescribed medication to prevent nausea to be taken prior to treatment. At home, you may have to take medication during your treatment and up to 1 or 2 days following it, as needed.› Communicate with a member of your healthcare team if the nausea or vomiting is not relieved by your medication.
Usually, a total hair loss 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">› Use a gentle shampoo.
A decrease in the white blood cells will occur about 1 to 2 weeks following treatment. You may be at higher risk of infections during this period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Wash your hands often.› 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.› Quickly contact a member of your healthcare team if you notice any signs of infection (fever, chills, cough, sore throat, pain while urinating...)› During this period, avoid coming into contact with people who have contagious diseases.› In case of fever, do not take acetaminophen (Ex: Tylenol®, Atasol®) and anti-inflammatory medication (Ex : Motrin®, Advil®).› A medication given by injection will be prescribed for a few days following your treatment to help the production of white blood cells.

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A decrease in platelets may occur about 1 to 2 weeks following treatment. You may bruise or bleed more easily than you normally do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Use a tooth brush with soft bristles.› Check with your pharmacist before taking medications with Aspirin[®], ibuprofen or other anti-inflammatory drugs.› 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.
You may experience a decrease in red blood cells following your treatment. This phenomenon is called anemia and is characterized by signs of fatigue, pale color, dizziness and shortness of breath.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Keep active but respect signs of fatigue your body gives you; rest when you feel the need to.› If you notice one or any of these effects, contact a member of your healthcare team.
You may experience infusion-related reactions with rituximab, usually within 30 minutes to 2 hours of the start of the infusion. The most common reactions are fever and chills but hives, itching, hot flashes, difficulty breathing, headache, dizziness, nausea, swelling of tongue or throat may also happen. These symptoms, usually mild to moderate, are more frequent during the first infusion and less common with subsequent infusions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Medication to prevent allergic reactions will be prescribed prior to treatment.› Notify the nurse if these symptoms occur during the administration of the drug. Medication can be given to alleviate these symptoms.
Cyclophosphamide given on day 5 may irritate your bladder .	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Drink lots of water and liquids (10-12 glasses of 230 ml or 8 oz a day) for 48 hours following your treatment unless otherwise recommended by your doctor.› Consult a member of your healthcare team as soon as possible if you experience any of these symptoms: difficulty urinating, pain while you urinate, and/or blood in your urine.

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Prednisone tablets may cause heartburn, increased appetite, nervousness and sleep disturbances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› To minimize these side effects, take the tablets with food twice a day.› A medication to protect your stomach may be prescribed.› Notify a member of your healthcare team if these symptoms occur and affect your daily activities. Some measures can be recommended.
Ulcers in the mouth and the throat may appear approximately 7 to 10 days following the start of your treatment. Ulcers can also occur at the throat.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Gently and regularly brush your teeth after each meal and at bedtime.› 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.› Mouthwashes without alcohol found in stores are a good alternative.› If you notice ulcers, redness or painful areas in your mouth, contact a member of your healthcare team.
Leg weakness, numbness or tingling of hand and feet may occur. These symptoms usually increase with the number of treatments given.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› If you experience these symptoms, speak to a member of your healthcare team at your next visit.
You may experience constipation and abdominal cramps . This usually increases with the number of treatments received.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Consult a member of your healthcare team who will recommend appropriate laxatives if necessary.
You may experience shortness of breath, swelling of the ankles and rapid heartbeats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› If you notice any one of these effects, contact a member of your healthcare team as soon as possible.
Rare adverse effects that can be severe or serious to communicate quickly to your doctor	
Rarely, you may experience pain or abdominal cramps . This may happen mainly in the first weeks of your treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Notify a member of your healthcare team as soon as possible and consult your doctor.

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Specials considerations

- › Your **urine** may be a **reddish color** the day of treatment and the following day. This is normal and corresponds to the elimination of doxorubicine. Don't worry, it is not blood.
- › Take your **prednisone** tablets as prescribed, twice a day **with food**.
- › **If you forget a dose**, you may take it as soon as you remember, with a meal or a snack, but do not double your next dose. Try, however, to take your pills at the same time every day with food.
- › If you are taking **high blood pressure medication**, you should stop taking them at least 12 hours prior the administration of rituximab. Your pharmacist or your doctor will advise you on how to take them.
- › It is very important to drink plenty of fluid, especially during the first cycle. Furthermore, a medication, allopurinol, could be prescribed to decrease the risks of experiencing problems associated with the rapid destruction of abnormal cells.
- › You must avoid consuming **grapefruit** juice or grapefruit, Seville orange, starfruit and pomegranate because of an interaction that could increase the side effects of your treatment.

Pharmacist: _____

Phone: _____

from ____ h to ____ h (Monday to Friday)