

### 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 Patients***

Protocol:    **Cetuximab (Erbix®)**

**Date:** December 2010

**Revision:** October 2015

MEDICATION	ADMINISTRATION
Cetuximab	Continuous infusion over 60 minutes.  *The first dose is administered over 120 minutes.
<b><i>Treatment is started one week prior to radiotherapy and is repeated once a week for 6 to 7 weeks, while on radiotherapy</i></b>	

## General Information associated with your treatment

- ❑ Cetuximab is used with your radiotherapy to treat some types of cancer and to increase the efficacy of the radiotherapy.
- ❑ A **blood test** will be done prior to every treatment of cetuximab. Depending on its results and side effects of the previous treatment, the dose of medication might be adjusted or 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 herbs or lemon juice. Eating fruits, chewing non-sugared gums, etc. may mask the metallic taste.
- ❑ You can have an **active sexual** life during your treatments. However, a decrease in your sexual drive may occur during this period. This may also be influenced by different factors (fatigue, stress etc.).
- ❑ Effect of cetuximab on the embryo when administered during pregnancy is unknown. Therefore, a method of **contraception** is strongly recommended during treatments. 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 products. These may provoke an interaction with your treatment and diminish its efficacy.
- ❑ Follow the instructions given by your cancer center about the right way to handle and dispose of body fluids (for example urine, stools) in order to protect the environment and your relatives.
- ❑ Be sure to always have at hand the complete list of your medications, dietary supplements, vitamins and other natural health products. Give it to you doctor and your pharmacist. It is important to make them aware of any change.

## Adverse Effects and Management

<b>ADVERSE EFFECTS</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT</b>
<p>Light to moderate <b>nausea</b> may occur the same day or the day following your treatment. This effect may be increased by your radiotherapy treatment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As deemed necessary, you may be prescribed medication to be taken prior to treatment for the prevention of nausea. You may also be prescribed medication to be taken at home as needed.</li> <li>• Contact a member of your healthcare team if you have nausea that bothers you.</li> </ul>
<p>Usually there is <b>no hair loss associated</b> with your treatment of chemotherapy, but it might occur because of the radiotherapy.</p>	
<p>A decrease in the <b>white blood cells</b> is unlikely during your treatment. Nevertheless, you could be at higher risk to contract infections during this period.</p>	<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>› Quickly contact a member of your healthcare team 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>

ADVERSE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<p><b>Skin reactions</b> may occur 1 to 2 weeks after the start of your treatment. These reactions may present such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A <b>skin rash</b> on face, neck, chest, and upper trunk. This reaction looks like acnea and usually disappears within a few weeks after the end of the treatment.</li> <li>• Your <b>skin</b> might become <b>dryer, red and itchy</b>.</li> <li>• Your <b>skin</b> might become more <b>sensitive to the sun</b>.</li> </ul>	<p><b>To help preventing or alleviating those reactions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Use fragrance-free, alcohol-free mild soap or cleaning products. Also use bath or shower oils to avoid skin dryness.</li> <li>› Moisturize your skin twice a day with fragrance-free, thick, emollient-based creams like Aveeno<sup>MD</sup>, Neutrogena<sup>MD</sup> or Vaseline Intensive Care<sup>MD</sup> lotion.</li> <li>› Use non perfumed creams and cosmetics without alcohol or dye. Use make up recommended by dermatologists for masking skin problems.</li> <li>› Remove make up with a mild cleaning product.</li> <li>› Avoid sun exposure.</li> <li>› In case of unavoidable sun exposure, wear a hat and clothes with long sleeves.</li> <li>› Avoid over the counter acne care that can dry the skin</li> <li>› Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen (SPF of 30 or more) for up to 2 months after the end of your treatment.</li> </ul> <p><b>If despite all these measures, skin reactions appear:</b></p> <p>Consult a member of your healthcare team who will recommend appropriate measures.</p>

<b>ADVERSE EFFECTS</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT</b>
<p>You may experience <b>infusion-related reactions</b> with cetuximab during the infusion. The most common reactions are fever and chills but hives, itching, difficulty breathing, nausea, dizziness, changes in your blood pressure, sensation of a swollen tongue may also happen. These symptoms, usually mild to moderate, are more frequent during the first infusion and less common with subsequent infusions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medication to prevent allergic reactions will be prescribed prior to treatment.</li> <li>• Notify the nurse if these symptoms occur during the administration of the drug. Medication can be given to alleviate these symptoms.</li> </ul>
<p>You may experience <b>diarrhea</b> starting about 10-14 days after the start of the treatment. Usually diarrhea is not severe and does not get worse with increasing number of treatments.</p>	<p><b>Diarrhea must be treated with loperamide (Imodium®). If you experience more than 3 bowel movements per day, or if you have a bowel movement during the night:</b></p> <p>Take 2 tablets to start, then one tablet after each diarrhea.</p> <p><b>Other measures to take:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink lots of liquids (8-10 glasses a day).</li> <li>• Eat and drink often but in small quantities.</li> <li>• Avoid foods that are rich in fibres. (Cereals, fruits, vegetables, etc.)</li> <li>• Notify your doctor or pharmacist if diarrhea doesn't get better after 24 hours of taking loperamide.</li> </ul>

<b>ADVERSE EFFECTS</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT</b>
<p>You may experience <b>constipation</b>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise if possible</li> <li>• Drink lots of fluids (at least 8 glasses a day)</li> <li>• Eat foods that are rich in fibre (cereals, fruits and vegetables)</li> <li>• Communicate with a member of your healthcare team who, if necessary, will prescribe the appropriate laxatives.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ulcers in the mouth and the throat</b> may appear approximately 3 to 10 days after the start of your treatment. This effect may also be caused by your treatment of radiotherapy.</p>	<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.</li> <li>• 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 without alcohol 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>

<b>ADVERSE EFFECTS</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT</b>
<b>Fever</b> might occur during your treatment. This fever may be a reaction to the treatment rather than a sign of infection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you experience fever within the 24 hours following your treatment, you may take acetaminophen (Tylenol®, Atasol®...).</li> <li>• If the fever occurs later or persists for more than 24 hours and stays over 38,3°C or 101°F, you may have an infection. Consult immediately a member of your healthcare team or go to the Emergency Room.</li> </ul>
<b>Headache</b> may sometimes occur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If necessary, you may take acetaminophen (Tylenol, Atasol...) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin...). However, make sure you don't have a fever before taking it.</li> <li>• Consult a member of your healthcare team, if these symptoms persist.</li> </ul>
You might have <b>difficulty breathing</b> with or without <b>cough</b> . These symptoms are not common and may be related to your treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If these symptoms occur during the treatment, notify your doctor or your pharmacist as soon as possible.</li> </ul>
However, if you notice a cough and/or a persistent cough and sudden difficulty breathing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult immediately your doctor or go to the Emergency Room.</li> </ul>

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

From \_\_\_\_ h to \_\_\_\_ h (Monday to Friday)