

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 : FEC (Bonneterre)

Date : *September 2003*

Revision: *November 2015*

MEDICATION	ADMINISTRATION
Fluorouracil (5-FU)	Intravenously in a few minutes
Epirubicin	Intravenously in a few minutes
Cyclophosphamide	Intravenous infusion over 20 to 30 minutes
<i>Treatment repeated every 3 weeks</i>	

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General Information associated with your treatment

- ❑ This treatment is used to prevent the multiplication of abnormal cells and destroy them.
- ❑ A **blood test** will be done prior to every treatment cycle. 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 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 have a negative effect on the embryo. 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.
- ❑ 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. It 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 nausea and vomiting may occur mainly on the same day and the day following 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 will take medication on a regular basis during 1 or 2 days following your treatment, depending on your need.Communicate with your doctor or pharmacist 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 treatment. However, don't worry, your hair will 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 1 to 2 weeks following treatment. You may be at higher risk to contact infections during this period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Wash your hands often.During this period, avoid coming into contact with people who have contagious diseases.Quickly contact a member of your healthcare team if you notice any signs of infection (fever, chills, cough, sore throat, pain while urinating...)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.In case of fever, do not take acetaminophen (ex.: Tylenol[®], Atasol[®]) and anti-inflammatory medication (ex.: Motrin[®], Advil[®]).

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A decrease in platelets will occur 1 to 2 weeks following treatment. You may 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.• Consult 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.
Cyclophosphamide 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) and urinate frequently.• If you experience any of these symptoms: difficulty urinating, pain while you urinate, and/or blood in your urine, consult a member of your healthcare team as soon as possible.
Mouth ulcers may appear approximately 7 to 10 days following the start of your treatment.	<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 also useful.• If you notice ulcers, redness or painful areas in your mouth, contact a member of your healthcare team.

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You may experience shortness of breath, swelling of the ankles and rapid heartbeats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you notice any one these effects, contact a member of your healthcare team as soon as possible.
Your eyes may become excessively teary , itchy and may or may not develop redness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contact a member of your healthcare team who can recommend appropriate treatment.
Your skin may become more sensitive to the sun .	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid exposure to the sun.• Use sun screen SPF 30 or higher.• Wear a hat.
Your skin may become drier . Redness and itchiness may develop.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use a moisturizing cream as needed.
During your treatment, you may experience some pain, irritation, swelling or a burning sensation at the injection site	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Notify your nurse immediately if you feel any of these symptoms during treatment.

Special Consideration

- ☐ Your **urine** may be a **reddish colour** the same day or the day following your treatment. This is normal and corresponds to the elimination of epirubicin. Don't worry. It is not blood.

Pharmacist: _____

Phone: _____

From ____h to ____h (Monday to Friday)