

### 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 FOLFIRINOX

**Date:** December 2011

**Revision:** April 2016

Medication	Administration
Oxaliplatin	Intravenous infusion over 2 hours
Irinotecan	Intravenous infusion over 90 minutes
Folinic Acid (Leucovorin)	Intravenous infusion over 2 hours
5-Fluorouracil (5FU)	Intravenously over a few minutes Followed by an intravenous infusion over 46 hours
<i>Cycle repeated every 2 weeks</i>	

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## General information associated with your treatment

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- › These medications are 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 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 herbs or lemon juice. Eating fruits, 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. 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 treatments. The menstrual cycle, after stopping chemotherapy, may restart or return to normal. It may also stop permanently. However, a pregnancy may be possible and a method of **contraception** is strongly recommended during treatments. Chemotherapy administered during pregnancy may harm the embryo. 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 or increase side effects.
- › 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.

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Adverse effects	Management
Significant <b>nausea</b> and vomiting 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>
Depending on the individual, a <b>partial or total hair loss</b> may occur. In general, this happens 2 to 3 weeks after the start of the treatment. However, don't worry; your hair will grow back after treatments have ended.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Use gentle shampoo.</li><li>Avoid brushing hair vigorously.</li><li>Avoid hair spray, dyes and perms.</li></ul>
A decrease in the <b>white blood cells</b> will occur about <u>1 to 2 weeks</u> following treatment. You may be at higher risk to contract infections during this period.	<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®, Atasol®) and anti-inflammatory medication (ex.: Motrin®, Advil®).</li></ul>

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A decrease in <b>platelets</b> will occur about <u>1 to 2 weeks</u> 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®, 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></ul>
<b>Early diarrhea</b> may occur during the treatment or hours following your treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b><u>Immediately</u></b> notify your nurse if you feel abdominal cramps, hot flashes or excessive sweating during your treatment.</li><li>• Contact a member of your healthcare team or go directly to the emergency department if you have diarrhoea during the first 24 hours following your treatment. Medication can be given for this.</li></ul>

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<p>You may experience <b>delayed diarrhea</b> occurring 24 hours after your treatment. This diarrhea may be severe and lead to dehydration and must be treated quickly.</p>	<p><b>Delayed diarrhea must be treated <u>quickly</u> with loperamide (Imodium®)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If your bowel movements are different from your usual pattern, start loperamide. Take 2 tablets to start then one tablet every 2 hours during the day and 2 tablets every 4 hours at night until your bowel movements return to normal for at least 12 hours.</li><li>• <b><i>This dose is much more than recommended on the packaging. It is important to take the medication at the higher doses to stop the diarrhea.</i></b></li></ul> <p>Other measures to take:</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 fibre (cereals, fruits, vegetables, etc.).</li><li>• Contact a member of your healthcare team if the diarrhea does not improve after taking loperamide for 24 hours.</li></ul>
<p>You may experience <b>numbness or tingling of the hands and feet</b>. This phenomenon may be triggered or aggravated by the cold and may start a few hours after the injection of oxaliplatin and persist for a few days afterwards. You may also experience a <b>painful sensation</b> when exposed to cold (liquids, food, air conditioned).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Avoid exposing your hands or feet to cold for a few days following your treatment.</li><li>• Wear gloves and socks to protect you from the cold for a few days following the treatment.</li><li>• Wear a scarf around your neck to protect against the cold if necessary.</li><li>• Avoid drinking and eating cold foods for a few days following the treatment.</li><li>• If symptoms persist between treatments, speak to a member of your healthcare team at the time of your next treatment.</li></ul>

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During or immediately following your treatment with oxaliplatin, you may experience <b>the sensation of having difficulty swallowing or breathing</b> . This phenomenon is rare and disappear within a few hours after the start of the symptoms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Immediately notify your nurse if you experience this malaise during the administration of your medication.</li></ul>
<b>Ulcers in the mouth and the throat</b> may appear approximately 7 to 10 days following the start of your treatment.	<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 many times a day – after every meal and at bedtime. Do not drink or eat for one hour after you gargle.</li><li>• Avoid commercial mouthwash containing alcohol.</li><li>• If you notice ulcers, redness or painful areas in your mouth, contact a member of your healthcare team.</li></ul>
<b>Fever and chills</b> may occur a few hours following your treatment and should not last more than 24 hours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If these symptoms bother you, your doctor or pharmacist may recommend a pain killer such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®, Atasol®).</li><li>• Fever which occurs more than 48 hours after treatment may be the sign of an infection. Consult immediately a member of your healthcare team or go to the Emergency Room.</li></ul>
Your skin may become more <b>sensitive to the sun</b> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Avoid exposure to the sun.</li><li>• Use sun screen SPF 30 or higher.</li><li>• Wear a hat.</li></ul>
Your <b>skin</b> may become <b>drier</b> . Redness and itchiness may develop.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use a non perfumed moisturizing cream as needed.</li></ul>
Your <b>eyes</b> may become <b>excessively teary</b> , itchy and may or may not develop redness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contact a member of your healthcare team who can recommend appropriate treatment.</li></ul>

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## **Special Considerations**

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You must avoid consuming grapefruit, Seville orange, starfruit, pomelo, pomegranate or foods containing the aforementioned fruits because of an interaction with irinotecan that could increase the side effects of your medication.

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

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