

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 Gemcitabine and nab-paclitaxel (Abraxane®)

Date : December 2014

Revision: April 2016

| Medication | Administration |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Nab-paclitaxel | Intravenous infusion over 30 minutes on days 1, 8 and 15. |
| Gemcitabine | Intravenous infusion over 30 minutes on days 1, 8 and 15. |
| <i>Cycle repeated every 4 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 to every treatment. 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 *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. 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 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Nausea , usually light, may occur mainly on the same day and the day following your treatment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">› Before your treatment, medication to prevent nausea may be prescribed. At home, you may also have to take medication for 1 or 2 days or more, as needed.› Contact a member of your healthcare team if your medication doesn't relieve your nausea. |
| Depending on the individual, a partial or total hair loss 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">› Use gentle shampoo.› Avoid brushing hair vigorously.› Avoid hair spray, dyes and perms. |
| A decrease in the number of white blood cells will occur about 7 to 10 days following treatment. You may be at higher risk of 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.› Contact a member of your healthcare team quickly 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 the number of platelets will occur about 7 to 10 days 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. |
| 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. |
| Gradual fluid retention may occur with consecutive treatments and may present itself by swelling of the feet and hands, shortness of breath or rapid weight gain. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">› Raise your feet while sitting.› Avoid wearing clothes or shoes that are too tight.› Notify your doctor if you are gaining weight rapidly, if you experience some swelling or if you are easily short of breath. |
| You may sometimes experience diarrhea . | <ul style="list-style-type: none">› Drink lots of liquids unless otherwise instructed by your doctor.› Please contact a member of your healthcare team if you have significant diarrhea (more than 3 loose stools per day) for more than 24 hours.› If you have diarrhea with fever, contact immediately a member of your health care team or go to the Emergency Room. |
| Flu-like symptoms may occur shortly after your treatment. You may experience mild to moderate symptoms, mainly fever but also chills, headache, muscle or bone pain. These symptoms most often are mild to moderate and usually last only a few hours. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">› If these symptoms bother you, your doctor or pharmacist may recommend a pain killer such as acetaminophen (Tylenol[®], Atasol[®]).› If you experience fever and chills more than 48 hours after your treatment, you may have an infection. Consult immediately a member of your healthcare team or go to the Emergency Room. |

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| You may experience constipation . | <ul style="list-style-type: none">› Exercise if possible.› Drink lots of liquids (at least 8 glasses a day unless otherwise instructed by your doctor).› Eat foods that are rich in fibre (cereals, fruits and vegetables).› Communicate with a member of your healthcare team who, if necessary, will prescribe the appropriate laxatives. |
| A skin rash , usually mild, may occur following your treatment. It generally involves the trunk, the arms and legs and may be associated with itchiness. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">› Consult a member of your healthcare team who will recommend appropriate measures. |
| You may experience muscle and bone pain that may occur 2 to 3 days following your treatment. These symptoms usually last for 4 to 7 days. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">› If this occurs, speak to a member of your healthcare team who will recommend analgesics. |
| Pain, irritation, swelling or a burning sensation at the injection site may occur during treatment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">› Immediately advise your nurse if you experience this malaise during infusion. |
| Rare adverse effects that can be severe or serious to communicate quickly to your doctor | |
| You may experience allergic reactions during your treatment with nab-paclitaxel such as cutaneous eruptions, redness, itchiness, swelling and shortness of breath. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">› Notify the nurse immediately if you have difficulty breathing or if you experience swelling of the tongue or throat during treatment. |
| If you experience a cough or persistent fever with sudden difficulty breathing . | <ul style="list-style-type: none">› Consult immediately a member of your healthcare team or go to the Emergency Room. |

Special Consideration

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

Pharmacist : _____ Phone: _____
From _____ AM to _____ PM (Monday to Friday)