

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 GDP

Date: June 15th 2012

Revision date: May 2016

Medication	Administration
Gemcitabine	Intravenous infusion over 30 minutes on days 1 and 8.
Cisplatine	Intravenous infusion over a few hours, depending on the dose, on day 1.
Dexaméthasone	Tablets to take once a day during breakfast for 4 days.
<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 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 fine herbs or lemon juice. Eating fruits, chewing non-sugared gums, etc. may mask the metallic taste.
- › Consumption of **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 various 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. 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.
- › For **pre-menopausal female patients**, chemotherapy may cause irregularities or cessation of the menstrual cycle during treatments. After stopping chemotherapy, the menstrual cycle 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 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
Severe nausea and vomiting may occur mainly on the same day and the day following your intravenous treatment with cisplatin.	› 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.
Nausea , usually light, may occur mainly on the same day and the day following your treatment with gemcitabine alone.	› Communicate with a member of your healthcare team if the nausea or vomiting is not relieved by your medication.
Depending on the individual, thinning of the hair 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.	› Use gentle shampoo. › Avoid brushing hair vigorously. › Avoid hair spray, dyes and perms.
A decrease in the white blood cells will occur about 1 week following treatment. You may be at higher risk of infections during this period.	› 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 you urinate, etc.). › 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 may 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.
You may experience a decrease of red blood cells following your treatment. This phenomenon is called anemia and is characterised 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.
Flu-like symptoms may occur shortly after your treatment. You may experience mild to moderate symptoms consisting mainly of fever but also chills, headache, muscle or bone pain. These symptoms 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.
Cisplatin may affect your kidneys .	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Drink plenty of water or fluid (10-12 glasses (230ml-8oz.) daily for the 48 to 72 hours following your treatment unless otherwise instructed by your doctor and urinate frequently.› Notify a member of your healthcare team if you urinate less than normally.
Cisplatin may cause ringing in your ears and rarely hearing loss .	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Notify a member of your healthcare team at your next visit.

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Leg weakness, numbness or tingling of hand and feet may occur. These symptoms usually increase with the number of treatments given.	› If these side effects impair your normal daily activities, speak to a member of your healthcare team at your next visit.
A gradual fluid retention may occur with consecutive treatments and may present itself by swelling of hands, ankles and feet.	› Raise your feet while sitting. › Avoid wearing tight clothes or shoes. › Notify your doctor if you are gaining weight rapidly, if you experience some swelling or if you are easily short of breath.
A usually mild skin rash may occur following your treatment. It generally involves the trunk and extremities and might be associated with itchiness.	› Consult a member of your healthcare team who will recommend appropriate measures.
Dexamethasone tablets may cause heartburn, increased appetite, nervousness and sleep disturbances .	› To minimize these side effects, take the tablets with food in the morning. Notify a member of your healthcare team if these symptoms occur and affect your daily activities. Some measures can be recommended.

Pharmacist: _____

Phone: _____

From ____ h to ____ h (Monday to Friday)