

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: R-FC

Date: November 2009

Revision date: May 2016

MEDICATION	ADMINISTRATION
Rituximab	Intravenous infusion over a few hours, day 1
Cyclophosphamide	Intravenous infusion over 20 to 30 minutes daily for 3 days
Fludarabine	Intravenous infusion over 30 minutes, daily for 3 days
Treatment repeated every 28 days	

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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 **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 negative effects on the embryo may occur. In fact, the production of spermatozooids may be reduced or completely absent during treatments. This reduction of **fertility** does not prevent erection or sexual activity. In certain patients, this reduction of fertility may be permanent, may ameliorate or return to normal after the treatments have stopped. 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 chemotherapy.
- › 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 your doctor and your pharmacist. It is important to make them aware of any change.

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<i>SIDE EFFECTS</i>	<i>MANAGEMENT</i>
Nausea, usually light, may occur mainly on the treatment days and the day following your last day of 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. • Communicate with a member of your healthcare team if your medication does not relieve your nausea.
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use gentle shampoo. • Avoid brushing hair vigorously. • Avoid hair spray, dyes and perms.
A decrease in the white blood cells will occur about 2 weeks 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. • Quickly contact a member of your healthcare team if you notice any signs of infection (fever, chills, cough, sore throat, pain while you urinate...). • Consult your doctor or go immediately to the Emergency Room if you have a fever of 38,3 °C (101 °F) once or 38 °C (100,4 °F) twice one hour apart. • In case of fever, do not take acetaminophen (ex.: Tylenol®, Atasol®) and anti-inflammatory medication (ex.: Motrin®, Advil®).
You may experience infusion-related reactions with rituximab, usually within 30 minutes to 2 hours of the start of the infusion. The most common reactions are fever and chills but hives, itching, hot flashes, difficulty breathing, headache, dizziness, nausea, swelling of the tongue may also happen. These symptoms, usually mild to moderate, are more frequent during the first infusion and less common with subsequent infusions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medication to prevent allergic reactions will be prescribed prior to treatment. • Notify the nurse if these symptoms occur during the administration of the drug. Medication can be given to alleviate these symptoms.

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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.• Consult a member of your healthcare team as soon as possible if you experience any of these symptoms: difficulty urinating, pain while you urinate, and/or blood in your urine.
Fever and chills may occur a few hours following your treatment and should not last more than 48 hours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If these symptoms bother you, your doctor or pharmacist may recommend a pain killer such as acetaminophen (Ex: Tylenol®, Atasol®)• 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.
Rarely, you may experience pain or abdominal cramps . This may happen mainly in the first weeks of your treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Notify a member of your healthcare team as soon as possible and consult your doctor.
For the complete duration of your treatment and for many months after its completion, your immune system will be impaired and you will be at a higher risk of infections .	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You will be prescribed a few medications (antibiotics, antivirals) to decrease the risk of infection.

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Special Considerations

If you are taking **high blood pressure medication**, you should stop taking them at least 12 hours prior the administration of rituximab. Your pharmacist or your doctor will advise you on how to take them.

It is very important to drink plenty of fluid, especially during the first few cycles. Furthermore, a medication, allopurinol, could be prescribed to you to decrease the risks of experiencing problems associated with the rapid destruction of abnormal cells.

Pharmacist: _____

Phone: _____

From ____ h to ____ h (Monday to Friday)