

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 Protocol VMP (weekly)

Date: February 2011

Revision: May 2016

Medication	Administration
Melphalan	___ tablets once daily on days 1 through 4. Take either 1 hour before or 2 hours after a meal.
Prednisone	___ 50 mg tablets + ___ 5 mg tablets to be taken orally on days 1 through 4. Take at breakfast with food.
Bortezomib	Intravenously over three to five seconds or subcutaneously in the thigh or abdomen Cycles 1 through 9 : days 1, 8, 15, 22
<i>Cycle repeated every 35 days for 9 cycles</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 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, chewing non-sugared gums, etc. may mask the metallic taste.
- › **Alcohol** (in small quantities) is permitted and will not affect the efficacy of treatments.
- › 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 remains 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.
- › 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.).
- › 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 and management

Adverse effects	Management
Rarely, slight nausea may occur during your treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› As deemed necessary, you may be prescribed medication to be taken prior to treatment for the prevention of nausea. You may also be prescribed medication to be taken at home as needed.› Contact a member of your healthcare team if you have nausea that bothers you.
Usually there is no hair loss with this treatment.	
A decrease in the white blood cells will occur about 2 to 3 weeks following treatment. You may be at higher risk to contract 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®).
Fever and chills may occur a few hours following the administration of bortezomib.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Notify your pharmacist who will recommend appropriate measures to be taken.

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A decrease in platelets will occur during your 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 sometimes experience diarrhea after the start of treatment.	<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.
You may experience constipation .	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Exercise if possible.› Drink lots of fluids (at least 8 glasses a day).› 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.
You may experience numbness or tingling of the hands and feet . This phenomenon usually increases with the number of treatments received.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› If you experience these symptoms, notify a member of your healthcare team at your next visit.
You may experience fatigue during your treatments. This is usually only temporary and may be related to different reasons (medication, stress, the disease).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Maintain a good level of activity but rest when you feel the need to.

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A gradual fluid retention may occur with consecutive treatments and may present itself by swelling of hands, ankles and feet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› 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.
Prednisone tablets may cause heartburn , increased appetite , nervousness and sleep disturbances .	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› To minimise 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.
You may experience difficulty breathing , with or without cough . These rare symptoms could be related to your treatment or your cancer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› If you notice sudden onset difficult breathing with a cough or a fever, notify your doctor immediately or go to the emergency room.

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Special considerations

- › Bortezomib may cause your blood pressure to drop, which could lead to fatigue, dizziness, fainting or blurry sight. Do not drive, use machinery or dangerous tools if you feel such symptoms.
- › Green tea or vitamin C modifies bortezomib action. Avoid green tea and drinks or food that contain green tea or vitamin C supplements for the whole duration of your treatment with bortezomib.
- › **If you forget a dose of melphalan or prednisone**, you may take it as soon as you remember but do not double your next dose. Try, however, to take your pills **in a regular, routine manner as prescribed**.
- › Wash your hands immediately after handling your melphalan tablets.
- › Keep your melphalan tablets out of the reach of children, in a refrigerator and protected from light, heat or moisture.
- › Don't throw away unused medication at home. Bring them back to your pharmacy to be destroyed safely.

Pharmacist: _____

Phone: _____

from ____ h to ____ h (Monday to Friday)