

### 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 Cetuximab

**Date:** October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012

**Revision:** April 2016

Medication	Administration
Cetuximab	Intravenous infusion over 1 hour*
	*The first infusion is always administered over 2 hours
<i>Cycle repeated every week</i>	

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## General information associated with your treatment

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- › Cetuximab is used to prevent 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.).
- › It is not known if cetuximab may affect the embryo if administered during the pregnancy. A method of **contraception** is strongly recommended during treatments. Breast-feeding is contra-indicated during the whole duration of 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
Rarely, <b>slight nausea</b> may occur the same day or the day following your treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› 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.</li><li>› Contact a member of your healthcare team if you have nausea that bothers you.</li></ul>
Usually there is <b>no hair loss</b> with this treatment.	
<p>You might experience some skin reactions beginning about one or two weeks after starting your treatment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› You might develop a <b>rash</b> on face, neck, chest, back, and arms. This reaction looks like acne and usually disappears within a few weeks after the end of the treatment.</li><li>› Your <b>skin</b> may become <b>drier</b>. Redness and itchiness may develop.</li><li>› Your skin may become more <b>sensitive to the sun</b>.</li></ul>	<p><b>To help prevent or decrease these reactions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Use fragrance-free, alcohol-free mild soap or cleaning products. Also use bath or shower oils to avoid skin dryness.</li><li>› Moisturize your skin twice a day with fragrance-free, thick, emollient-based creams like Aveeno<sup>MD</sup>, Neutrogena<sup>MD</sup> or Vaseline Intensive Care<sup>MD</sup> lotion.</li><li>› Use non perfumed creams and cosmetics without alcohol or dye. Use make up recommended by dermatologists for masking skin problems.</li><li>› Remove make up with a mild cleaning product.</li><li>› Avoid sun exposure. In case of unavoidable sun exposure, wear a hat and clothes with long sleeves.</li><li>› Avoid over the counter acne care that can dry the skin.</li><li>› Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen (SPF of 30 or more) for up to 2 months after the end of your treatment.</li></ul> <p><b>If despite all these measures, skin reactions appear:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Consult a member of your healthcare team who will recommend appropriate measures.</li></ul>

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You may experience <b>infusion-related reactions</b> with cetuximab. The most common reactions are fever and chills but hives, itching, hot flashes, difficulty breathing, headache, dizziness, nausea, changes of your blood pressure, swelling of tongue or throat 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"><li>› Notify the nurse if these symptoms occur during the administration of the drug.</li><li>› Medication can be given to alleviate these symptoms.</li><li>› Medication to prevent allergic reactions will be prescribed prior to treatment.</li></ul>
You may experience <b>constipation</b> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Exercise if possible.</li><li>› Drink lots of fluids (at least 8 glasses a day unless otherwise instructed by your doctor).</li><li>› Communicate with a member of your healthcare team who, if necessary, will prescribe the appropriate laxatives.</li></ul>
You may sometimes experience <b>diarrhea</b> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Drink lots of liquids (unless otherwise instructed by your doctor).</li><li>› If you have significant diarrhea (more than 3 loose stools per day) for more than 24 hours, please contact a member of your healthcare team who will recommend appropriate measures.</li></ul>
You may experience <b>shortness of breath, with or without cough</b> . These symptoms are rare and might be related to your treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› If you notice any one these effects, contact a member of your healthcare team as soon as possible.</li></ul>
You may experience headache.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› If this happens, talk to a member of your healthcare team who will recommend an appropriate analgesic.</li></ul>

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<b>Ulcers in the mouth and the throat</b> may appear approximately 3 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 4 times a day (after every meal and at bedtime). Do not drink or eat for one hour after you gargle.</li><li>› Mouthwashes without alcohol found in stores are a good alternative.</li><li>› If you notice ulcers, redness or painful areas in your mouth, contact a member of your healthcare team.</li></ul>
<b>Eyelashes and nails changes</b> may occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› At your next visit, notify a member of your healthcare team if these changes occur.</li></ul>
<b>Fever</b> may occur during your treatment. This fever might be a reaction to your treatment and not an infection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› If these symptoms bother you, your doctor or pharmacist may recommend a pain killer such as acetaminophen (ex.: Tylenol®, Atasol®).</li><li>› Fever which occurs more than 24 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>
If you experience a <b>cough</b> and/or <b>persistant fever</b> with <b>sudden difficulty breathing</b> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Consult immediately a member of your healthcare team or go to the Emergency Room.</li></ul>

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

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

from \_\_\_\_ h to \_\_\_\_ h (Monday to Friday)