

**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:** Irinotecan (administration every week)

**Date :** December 2002

**Revision:** May 2016

MEDICATION	ADMINISTRATION
Irinotecan	Intravenous infusion over 90 minutes Once a week for 4 weeks
<b><i>Treatment repeated every 6 weeks (4 weeks of treatment followed by 2 weeks of rest)</i></b>	

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## General Information associated with your treatment

- ❑ Irinotecan is 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 on a temporary basis during this period. This may also be influenced by various factors (fatigue, stress, etc.)
- ❑ For **male patients**, the sperm count may be affected. 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 the **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 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.

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- ❑ 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.

<b>SIDE EFFECTS</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT</b>
Significant <b>nausea</b> and vomiting may occur mainly on the same day and the day following your treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You will be prescribed medication to prevent nausea to be taken prior to treatment. At home, you will take medication as needed for 1 or 2 days, or more, depending on your need.</li> <li>Communicate with a member of your healthcare team if you have nausea or vomiting that is not relieved by medication.</li> </ul>
Depending on the individual, a <b>partial or total hair loss</b> 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"> <li>Use gentle shampoo.</li> <li>Avoid brushing hair vigorously.</li> <li>Avoid hair sprays, dyes and perms.</li> </ul>
A decrease in the <b>white blood cells</b> will occur 1 to 2 weeks following treatment. You may be at higher risk of infections during this period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wash your hands often.</li> <li>During this period, avoid coming into contact with people who have contagious diseases.</li> <li>Quickly contact a member of your healthcare team if you notice any signs of infection (fever, chills, cough, sore throat, pain while you urinate...).</li> <li>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®).</li> </ul>
<b>Early diarrhea</b> may occur during the treatment or in the hours following your treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Immediately</b> notify your nurse if you feel abdominal cramps, hot flashes or excessive sweating during your treatment.</li> <li>Contact us or go directly to the Emergency Room if you have diarrhea during the first 24 hours following your treatment. Medication can be given for</li> </ul>

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	<p>this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you have diarrhea with fever, contact immediately a member of your health care team or go to Emergency Room.</li> </ul>
<p>You may experience <b>delayed diarrhea</b> occurring 24 hours after your treatment. This may be severe and lead to dehydration and must be treated quickly.</p>	<p><b>Delayed diarrhea must be treated <u>quickly</u> with loperamide (Imodium®)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If your bowel movements are different from your usual pattern, start loperamide. Take 2 tablets to start then one tablet every 2 hours during the day and 2 tablets every 4 hours at night until your bowel movements return to normal for at least 12 hours.</li> <li><b><i>This dose is much more than recommended on the packaging. It is important to take the medication at the higher doses to stop the diarrhea.</i></b></li> </ul> <p>Other measures to take:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drink lots of liquids (8-10 glasses a day unless otherwise instructed by your doctor).</li> <li>Eat and drink often but in small quantities.</li> <li>Contact a member of your healthcare team if the diarrhea does not improve after taking loperamide for 24 hours.</li> <li>If you have with diarrhea with fever, contact immediately a member of your health care team or go to Emergency Room.</li> </ul>
<p>You may experience <b>constipation</b>.</p>	<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>Eat foods that are rich in fibre (cereals, fruits and vegetables).</li> <li>Communicate with a member of your healthcare team who, if necessary, will prescribe the appropriate laxatives .</li> </ul>

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#### **Special Consideration**

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

**Pharmacist:**

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**Phone:**

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**From \_\_\_\_h to \_\_\_\_h (Monday to Friday)**