

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 FOLFIRI - RMH

Date: May 2010

Revision: June 2016

Medication	Administration
Irinotecan	Intravenous infusion over 30 min
Folinic Acid (Leucovorin)	Intravenous infusion over 15 min
Fluorouracil (5-FU)	Intravenously over a few minutes Followed by an intravenous infusion over 46 hours
<i>Cycle is repeated every 2 weeks</i>	

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General Information associated with your treatment

- › Irinotecan and fluorouracil (5-FU) are used to prevent the multiplication of abnormal cells and destroy them. Folinic Acid increases the anticancer activity of fluorouracil (5-FU).
- › 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. 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 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. After stopping chemotherapy the menstrual cycle 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.
- › 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
Significant nausea and vomiting may occur mainly on the same day and the day following your treatment. After the infusion is finished, light nausea might persist sometimes till the next day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› 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.› Communicate with a member of your healthcare team if the nausea or vomiting is not relieved by your medication.
Depending on the individual, more or less important partial hair loss 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 1 to 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 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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Early diarrhea may occur during the treatment or hours following your treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› <u>Immediately</u> notify your nurse if you feel abdominal cramps, hot flashes or excessive sweating during your treatment.› Contact a member of your healthcare team or go directly to the emergency department if you have diarrhoea during the first 24 hours following your treatment. Medication can be given for this.› If you have diarrhea with fever, contact immediately a member of your health care team or go to Emergency Room.
You may experience delayed diarrhea occurring 24 hours after your treatment. This diarrhea may be severe and lead to dehydration and must be treated quickly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› <u>Delayed diarrhea must be treated quickly with loperamide (Imodium®)</u>› 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.› <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>› Other measures to take:› Drink lots of liquids (8-10 glasses a day, unless otherwise instructed by your doctor).› Eat and drink often but in small quantities.› Contact a member of your healthcare team if the diarrhea does not improve after taking loperamide for 24 hours.› If you have with diarrhea with fever, contact immediately a member of your health care team or go to Emergency Room.

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Ulcers in the mouth and the throat may appear approximately 7 to 10 days following the start of your treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Gently and regularly brush your teeth after each meal and at bedtime.› 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.› Mouthwashes without alcohol found in stores are a good alternative.› If you notice ulcers, redness or painful areas in your mouth, contact a member of your healthcare team.
Your skin may become more sensitive to the sun .	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Avoid exposure to the sun.› Use sun screen SPF 30 or higher.› Wear a hat.
Your eyes may become excessively teary , itchy and may or may not develop redness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Contact a member of your healthcare team who can recommend appropriate treatment.
Your skin may become drier . Redness and itchiness may develop.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Use a non perfumed moisturizing cream as needed.
Rare adverse effects that can be severe or serious to communicate quickly to your doctor	
If you experience palpitations of the heart, chest pain and/or shortness of breath.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Immediately go to the Emergency Room.

Special Consideration

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: _____

Phone: _____

From ____ h to ____ h (Monday to Friday)