

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

ECF protocol

Date: February 2007

Revision date: June 2016

Medication	Administration
Epirubicin	Intravenous over a few minutes on day 1
Cisplatin	Intravenous infusion over a few hours, depending on the dosage, on day 1
Fluorouracil	Intravenously as a continuous infusion via an infuser. This infuser will be changed every 7 days.
<i>Cycle repeated every 3 weeks</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 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.)
- › 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 some patients, this reduction of fertility may be permanent, may ameliorate or return to normal after the treatments have stopped.
- › 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 you 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
Severe nausea and vomiting may occur and persist up to 5 days following your treatment with cisplatin. Slight nausea may occur while you are getting the continuous infusion of fluorouracil.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› On day one, you will be prescribed medication to prevent nausea to be taken prior to treatment. At home, you will take medication on a regular basis and as needed for at least 2 days following your treatment and during the continuous infusion.› Communicate with a member of your healthcare team if the nausea or vomiting is not relieved by your medication.
Depending on the individual, a partial or total 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 and may last during all your 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®).

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Ulcers in the mouth may appear approximately 7 to 10 days following the start of your treatment or at any moment during the continuous infusion of fluorouracil. These ulcers may also appear in your throat.	<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.
You may sometimes experience diarrhea , which may start approximately 5-8 days after the start of treatment or at any time during the continuous infusion of fluorouracil.	<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 to 48 hours.
Leg weakness, numbness or tingling of hand and feet may occur. These symptoms usually increase with the number of treatments given. You may also experience numbness, tingling, swelling, redness on your hands and feet. This is called hand and foot syndrome and is rarely painful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Notify a member of your healthcare team if these symptoms occur and affect your daily activities. Some measures can be recommended.
Cisplatin may affect your kidneys .	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Drink plenty of water or fluid (10-12 glasses (230ml-8oz.) daily for the 48 to 72 hours following your treatment. (unless your doctor tells you not to) and urinate frequently.› Notify a member of your healthcare team if you urinate less than normally.
Cisplatin may cause ringing in your ears and rarely hearing loss .	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› If you experience these symptoms, notify a member of your healthcare team at your next visit.

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Your eyes may become excessively teary , itchy and may or may not develop redness.	› Contact a member of your healthcare team who can recommend appropriate treatment.
Your skin may become drier . Redness and itchiness may develop.	› Use a non-perfumed moisturizing cream as needed.
Your skin may become more sensitive to the sun .	› Avoid going into the sun. › Use sun screen SPF 30 or higher. › Wear a hat.
You may experience shortness of breath , swelling of the ankles and rapid heartbeats.	› If you notice any one these effects, contact a member of your healthcare team as soon as possible.
Pain, irritation, swelling or burning sensation at the injection site may occur during treatment on day 1 while receiving epirubicin.	› Immediately advise your nurse if you experience this malaise during infusion.
Rare adverse effects that can be severe or serious to communicate quickly to your doctor	
If you experience rapid heartbeats, pain in the chest and/or sudden shortness of breath.	› If you experience any of these symptoms, immediately go to the Emergency Room.

Special Consideration

Your **urine** may be a **reddish color** the same day or the day following your treatment. This is normal and corresponds to the elimination of epirubicin. Don't worry, it is not blood

Pharmacist: _____

Phone: _____

From ____ h to ____ h (Monday to Friday)