

### 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 Doxorubicin

**Date:** June 2016

**Revision date:**

| Medication                              | Administration                 |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Doxorubicin                             | Intravenous over a few minutes |
| <i>Treatment repeated every 3 weeks</i> |                                |

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## General Information associated with your treatment

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- › This medication is used to prevent the multiplication of abnormal cells and destroy them.
- › A **blood test** will be prior to every cycle. Depending on the 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 *finest herbes* or lemon juice. Eating fruits and non sugared candies, chewing non-sugared gums, etc., may mask the metallic taste.
- › **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 different factors (fatigue, stress etc.)
- › In **pre-menopausal female patients**, chemotherapy may cause irregularities or cessation of the **menstrual cycle** during treatment. The menstrual cycle may restart or return to normal after the end of treatment. The menstrual cycle may also stop permanently. However, a pregnancy remains possible and chemotherapy administered during pregnancy may harm the embryo. A birth control method is strongly recommended during treatment. Breast-feeding is contra-indicated during treatment.
- › For **male patients**, the sperm count may be affected and negative effects on the embryo may occur. 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. 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.
- › Consult your doctor or pharmacist before you take other medications (even over the counter medications available without a prescription) or **natural health products** or if need to receive a **vaccine**. 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.  | <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 on a regular basis during 1 or 2 days following your treatment, depending on your need.</li><li>› Communicate with a member of your healthcare team if the nausea or vomiting is not relieved by your medication.</li></ul>   |
| Usually, a <b>total hair loss</b> will occur. In general this may happen 2 to 3 weeks after the start of the treatment. However, don't worry; your hair should grow back after treatments have ended. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Use a gentle shampoo.</li></ul>   |
| A decrease in the <b>white blood cells</b> 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"><li>› Wash your hands often.</li><li>› During this period, avoid coming into contact with people who have contagious diseases.</li><li>› Contact a member of your healthcare team quickly if you notice any signs of infection (fever, chills, cough, sore throat, pain while urinating...).</li><li>› 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.</li><li>› In case of fever, do not take acetaminophen (Ex: Tylenol®, Atasol®) and anti-inflammatory medication (Ex : Motrin®, Advil®).</li></ul> |
| A decrease in <b>platelets</b> may occur about 1 to 2 weeks following treatment. You may bruise or bleed more easily than you normally do.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Use a tooth brush with soft bristles.</li><li>› Check with your pharmacist before taking medications with Aspirin®, Ibuprofen or other anti-inflammatory drugs.</li><li>› 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.</li></ul>  |

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|---|--|
| <b>Ulcers in the mouth</b> and the throat may appear approximately 7 to 10 days following the start of your treatment. Ulcers can also occur in the throat. | <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> |
| 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>› 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.</li><li>› If you have with diarrhea with fever, contact immediately a member of your health care team.</li></ul>   |
| <b>Pain, irritation, swelling or a burning sensation</b> at the injection site may occur during treatment.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Immediately advise your nurse if you experience this malaise during infusion.</li></ul>  |
| <b>Rare adverse effects that can be severe or serious to communicate quickly to your doctor</b>   |  |
| You may experience <b>shortness of breath, swelling</b> of the ankles and rapid heartbeats.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› If you notice any one of these effects, contact a member of your healthcare team as soon as possible.</li><li>› Tests may be done to check your heart.</li></ul>   |

### Special Considerations

- › 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 doxorubicin. Don't worry, it is not blood.
- › You must avoid consuming grapefruit juice or grapefruit, Seville orange, starfruit, pomelo and pomegranate or foods containing the aforementioned fruits because of an interaction that could increase the side effects of doxorubicin.

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

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