

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

FOLFOX-6m

Date: June 2016

Revision :

Medication	Administration
Oxaliplatin	Intravenous infusion over 2 hours
Folinic Acid	Intravenous infusion over 2 hours
Fluorouracil	Intravenous over a few minutes Followed by an intravenous infusion over 46 hours
<i>Treatment repeated every 2 weeks for a total of ____ cycles</i>	

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General Information associated with your treatment

- › Fluorouracil and Oxaliplatin are used to prevent the multiplication of abnormal cells and to destroy them. Folinic acid enhances the antineoplastic effect of fluorouracil.
- › 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. 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 **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 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 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
Significant nausea and vomiting may occur mainly on the same day and the day following your treatment. Symptoms may last up to one day after the end of the continuous infusion of fluorouracil.	<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 as needed for 1 or 2 days, or more, depending on your need.› Communicate with a member of your healthcare team if you have nausea or vomiting that is not relieved by medication.
Depending on the individual, thinning of the hair 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 sprays, 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 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®, Aleve®).
A decrease in platelets will occur about 1 to 2 weeks following treatment. You may bleed more easily than you normally do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Use a tooth brush with soft bristles.› Check with your pharmacist before taking medications with Aspirin®, ibuprofen or other anti-inflammatory drugs.› Consult 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.

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You may experience numbness or tingling of the hands and feet . This phenomenon may be triggered or aggravated by the cold and may start a few hours after the injection of Oxaliplatin and persist for a few days afterwards. You may also experience a painful sensation when exposed to cold (liquids, food, air conditioned).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Avoid exposing your hands or feet to the cold for a few days following your treatment.› Wear gloves and socks to protect you from the cold for a few days following the treatment.› Avoid drinking and eating cold foods for a few days following the treatment.› Wear a scarf around your neck to protect against the cold if necessary.› If symptoms persist between treatments, speak to a member of your healthcare team at the time of your next treatment.
During or immediately following your treatment with Oxaliplatin, you may experience the sensation of having difficulty swallowing or breathing . This phenomenon is rare and is not dangerous.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Immediately notify your nurse if you experience this malaise during the administration of your medication.
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 as soon as possible.
You may sometimes experience diarrhea a few days after your treatment.	<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.
Your skin may become more sensitive to the sun .	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Avoid going into the sun.› Use sun screen SPF 30 or higher.› Wear a hat.

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Fever and chills may occur a few hours following your treatment and should not last more than 48 hours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› If these symptoms bother you, your doctor or pharmacist may recommend a pain killer such as acetaminophen (Ex: Tylenol®, Atasol®).› Fever which occurs more than 48 hours after treatment may be the sign of an infection. Consult immediately a member of your healthcare team or go to the Emergency Room.
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 rapid heartbeats, pain in the chest and/or sudden shortness of breath.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› If you experience any of these symptoms, immediately go to the Emergency Room.

Pharmacist: _____

Phone: _____

From ____h to ____h (Monday to Friday)