

### 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 Rituximab-Bendamustine

**Date:** November 2016

**Revision:**

Medication	Administration
Rituximab	Intravenous infusion over a few hours on day 1
Bendamustine	Intravenous infusion over 30 to 60 minutes on days 1 and 2
<i>Cycle repeated every 4 weeks for a total of 6 cycles</i>	

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## General Information associated with your treatment

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- › These medications are used to prevent the multiplication of abnormal cells and destroy them.
- › A **blood test** will be done before 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.
- › Your **appetite may diminish**. Eat more often, in smaller quantities.
- › 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 **sense of taste may be altered**. Enhance foods with *fines 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. 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 treatment. 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 treatment.
- › Consult your doctor or pharmacist before you take other medications (even over the counter medications available without a prescription), natural health products or if you 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 <b>nausea and vomiting</b> 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 there is <b>no hair loss</b> with this treatment.	
A decrease in the <b>white blood cells</b> will occur about 2 to 3 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>› 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>› 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>› In case of fever, do not take acetaminophen (Ex: Tylenol®, Atasol®) and anti-inflammatory medication (Ex : Motrin®, Advil®, Aleve®).</li></ul>
A decrease in <b>platelets</b> will occur about 2 to 3 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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You may experience <b>infusion-related reactions</b> with <u>rituximab</u> , usually within 30 minutes to 2 hours of the start of the infusion. The most common reactions are fever and chills but hives, itching, hot flashes, difficulty breathing, headache, dizziness, nausea, swelling of tongue or throat may also happen. These symptoms, usually mild to moderate, are more frequent during the first infusion and less common with subsequent infusions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Medication to prevent allergic reactions will be prescribed prior to treatment.</li><li>› Notify the nurse if these symptoms occur during the administration of the drug. Medication can be given to alleviate these symptoms.</li></ul>
You may also experience <b>infusion-related reactions</b> with <u>bendamustine</u> such as fever, chills, itchiness or redness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Notify the nurse if these symptoms occur during the administration of the drug. Medication can be given to alleviate these symptoms.</li></ul>
You may experience <b>constipation</b> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Exercise if possible.</li><li>› Drink lots of liquids (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>
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>
You may experience <b>headaches</b> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› If this happens, talk to a member of your healthcare team who will recommend an appropriate analgesic.</li></ul>

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<b>Fever and chills</b> may occur a few hours following your treatment.	› 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 24 hours after treatment may be the sign of an infection. Consult immediately a member of your healthcare team or go to the Emergency Room.
You may experience <b>cough</b> . This symptom is rare and might be related to your treatment.	› If it bothers you, contact a member of your healthcare team who will recommend appropriate measures.
<b>Pain, irritation, swelling or a burning sensation</b> at the injection site may occur with bendamustine.	› Immediately advise your nurse if you experience this malaise during infusion.
<b>Rare adverse effects that can be severe or serious to communicate quickly to your doctor</b>	
Rarely, severe <b>skin rash</b> (redness, pimples, itchiness) can occur on the days following your treatment.	› Consult a member of your healthcare team.
Rarely, you may experience <b>pain or abdominal cramps</b> . This may happen mainly in the first weeks of treatment.	› Notify a member of your healthcare team as soon as possible and consult your doctor.

### Special Considerations

- › If you are taking **high blood pressure medication**, you should **stop taking them at least 12 hours prior the administration of rituximab on day 1**. Your pharmacist or your doctor will advise you on how to take them.
- › It is very important to drink plenty of fluids, especially during the first weeks of treatment. Furthermore, a medication (allopurinol) could be prescribed to decrease the risks of experiencing problems associated with the rapid destruction of abnormal cells.

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

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

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