

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 Protocol: DRC

Date: April 2017

Revision:

Medication	Administration
Dexamethasone	Intravenous over a few minutes on day 1
Rituximab	Intravenous infusion over a few hours on day 1
Cyclophosphamide	Tablets to be taken by mouth twice a day, morning and lunch with or without food, on days 1 to 5: _____ tablet(s) of 25 mg _____ tablet(s) of 50 mg

Cycle is repeated every 3 weeks for 6 cycles

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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 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 herbs* 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 treatment. 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. 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
Light to moderate nausea may occur during your treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Before your cyclophosphamide tablets, medication to prevent nausea may be prescribed.› You may also be prescribed medication to be taken at home as needed.› Contact a member of your healthcare team if your medication does not relieve your nausea.
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 spray, dyes and perms.
A decrease in the white blood cells may occur about 1 to 2 weeks after the start of your treatment. You may be at higher risk of infections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Wash your hands often.› During this period, avoid coming into contact with people who have contagious diseases.› 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.› Contact a member of your healthcare team quickly if you notice any signs of infection (fever, chills, cough, sore throat, pain while urinating...).› In case of fever, do not take acetaminophen (Ex: Tylenol®, Atasol®) and anti-inflammatory medication (Ex : Motrin®, Advil®, Aleve® ...).
A decrease in platelets may occur about 1 to 2 weeks after the start of your treatment. You may bruise or 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.› 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.

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You may experience infusion-related reactions with rituximab, 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">› Medication to prevent allergic reactions will be prescribed prior to treatment.› Notify the nurse if one of these symptoms occurs during the administration of the drug. Medication can be given to alleviate these symptoms.
Cyclophosphamide may irritate your bladder .	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Drink lots of water or liquids (10-12 glasses of 230 ml or 8 oz a day) while taking cyclophosphamide and for 48 hours thereafter unless otherwise recommended by your doctor.› Consult a member of your healthcare team as soon as possible if you experience any of these symptoms: difficulty urinating, pain while you urinate, and/or blood in your urine.
Rare adverse effects that can be severe or serious to communicate quickly to your doctor	
Rarely, you may experience pain or abdominal cramps . This may happen mainly in the first weeks of your treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Notify a member of your healthcare team as soon as possible and consult your doctor.

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Special Considerations

- › If you are taking **high blood pressure medication**, your healthcare team may advise you to **stop taking them at least 12 hours prior the administration of rituximab**. Your pharmacist or your doctor will advise you on how to take them.
- › Take your cyclophosphamide tablets as prescribed twice a day regularly in the morning and at lunch. Take the tablets with or without food with a large glass of water. If you have difficulty tolerating it, take them with food.
- › Tablets must be taken whole. Do not chew or crush them.
- › **If you forget a dose**, you may take it as soon as you remember but do not double your next dose. Try, however, to take your tablets regularly at the same time every day and in the same way (with or without food).
- › Wash your hands immediately after handling your tablets.
- › Keep your medication at room temperature, out of the reach of children and protected from light, heat or moisture.
- › Don't throw away unused medication at home. Bring it back to your pharmacy to be destroyed safely.

Pharmacist: _____

Phone: _____

from ____ h to ____ h (Monday to Friday)