

### 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 R-GEMOX

**Date:** November 2017

**Revision date:**

| Medication                          | Administration                                  |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Rituximab                           | Intravenous infusion over a few hours on day 1. |
| Gemcitabine                         | Intravenous infusion over 30 minutes on day 1.  |
| Oxaliplatin                         | Intravenous infusion over 2 hours on day 1.     |
| <i>Cycle repeated every 2 weeks</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 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 *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 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 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</b> 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>  |
| Depending on the individual, a <b>partial or total hair loss</b> 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"><li>› Use gentle shampoo.</li><li>› Avoid brushing hair vigorously.</li><li>› Avoid hair spray, dyes and perms.</li></ul>  |
| A decrease in the <b>white blood cells</b> will occur about 7 to 10 days 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®, Aleve®, ...).</li></ul> |

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|---|---|
| A decrease in <b>platelets</b> may occur about 7 to 10 days after the start of your 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<sup>®</sup>, 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>       |
| You may experience <b>infusion-related reactions</b> 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"><li>› Medication to prevent allergic reactions will be prescribed prior to treatment.</li><li>› Notify the nurse if one of these symptoms occurs during the administration of the drug. Medication can be given to alleviate these symptoms.</li></ul>  |
| <b>Flu-like symptoms</b> may occur shortly after your treatment. You may experience mild to moderate symptoms consisting mainly of fever but also chills, headache, muscle or bone pain. These symptoms are usually mild to moderate and should only persist for a few hours.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› If these symptoms bother you, your doctor or pharmacist may recommend a pain killer such as acetaminophen (Tylenol<sup>®</sup>, Atasol<sup>®</sup>).</li><li>› If you experience fever and chills more than 48 hours after your treatment, you may have an infection. Consult immediately a member of your healthcare team or go to the Emergency Room.</li></ul> |

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|--|--|
| <p>You may experience <b>numbness or tingling of the hands and feet</b>. This phenomenon may start a few hours after the injection of oxaliplatin and persist for a few days afterwards. It may be triggered or aggravated by the cold and you may also experience a <b>painful sensation</b> when exposed to cold (liquids, food, air, etc.).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Avoid exposing your hands or feet to the cold for a few days following your treatment.</li><li>› Wear gloves and socks to protect you from the cold for a few days following the treatment.</li><li>› Wear a scarf around your neck to protect against the cold if necessary.</li><li>› Avoid drinking and eating cold foods for a few days following the treatment.</li><li>› If symptoms persist between treatments, speak to a member of your healthcare team at the time of your next treatment.</li></ul> |
| <p>During or immediately following your treatment with oxaliplatin, you may experience <b>the sensation of having difficulty swallowing or breathing</b>. This phenomenon is rare and disappears within a few hours after the start of the symptoms.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Immediately notify your nurse if you experience this malaise during the administration of your medication or talk to a member of your healthcare team before your next treatment.</li></ul>  |
| <p>You may sometimes experience <b>diarrhea</b> after the start of treatment.</p>  | <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>   |

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|---|---|
| <b>Ulcers in the mouth</b> and the throat may appear a few days following the start of your treatment. These ulcers can also appear 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 <b>without</b> 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 as soon as possible.</li></ul> |
| A <b>skin rash</b> , usually mild, may occur following your treatment. It generally involves the trunk, the arms and legs and might be associated with itchiness. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Consult a member of your healthcare team who will recommend appropriate measures.</li></ul>   |
| A gradual <b>fluid retention</b> may occur with consecutive treatments and may present itself by swelling of hands, ankles and feet.                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Raise your feet while sitting.</li><li>› Avoid wearing tight clothes or shoes.</li><li>› Notify your doctor if you are gaining weight rapidly, if you experience some swelling or if you are easily short of breath.</li></ul>  |
| <b>Rare adverse effects that can be severe or serious to communicate quickly to your doctor</b>   |   |
| Rarely, you may experience <b>pain or abdominal cramps</b> . This may happen mainly in the first weeks of your treatment.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Notify a member of your healthcare team as soon as possible and consult your doctor.</li></ul>  |
| You may experience <b>cough, shortness of breath or feeling out of breath</b> .   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Consult immediately a member of your healthcare team or go to the Emergency Room.</li></ul>   |

### Special Consideration

- › It is very important to drink plenty of fluid, especially during the first few cycles. 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)