

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 Methotrexate high dose (outpatient)

Date: November 2016

Revision date: May 2017

| Medication | Administration |
|---------------------------|--|
| Methotrexate | Intravenous infusion over a few hours. |
| Folinic acid (Leucovorin) | Tablets to be taken by mouth. _____ tablets of 5 mg according to the following schedule: _____ |
| Sodium bicarbonate | Tablets to be taken by mouth. _____ tablets of 500 mg according to the following schedule: _____ |
| Other : | To be taken according to the following schedule: _____ _____ _____ |

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General Information associated with your treatment

- › This medication is used to prevent the multiplication of abnormal cells and destroy them.
- › A **blood test** will be done prior to every treatment and regularly for a few days thereafter. Depending on the results and side effects of the previous treatment, the dose of the medications 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 treatments. 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 and for a minimum of 6 months after the last 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 |
|---|---|
| Methotrexate may affect your kidneys . | <ul style="list-style-type: none">› Intravenous fluids will be administered and tablets of sodium bicarbonate will be prescribed to prevent this effect.› Drink plenty of water or fluid (8-12 glasses of 230ml or 8oz.) daily for the 48 to 72 hours following your treatment unless otherwise instructed by your medical team.› You will have to go to the hospital often to do blood tests following your treatment.› You will be given strips to test your urine. The test will have to be done every time you urinate or according to the instructions given by your medical team.› Notify a member of your healthcare team if you urinate less than normally. |
| Severe nausea and vomiting may occur mainly on the same day and the day following your treatment. | <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 on a regular basis during 1 or 2 days following your treatment, depending on your need.› Communicate with a member of your healthcare team if the nausea or vomiting is not relieved by your 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 spray, dyes and perms. |

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|---|--|
| 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.› 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 following 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.› Avoid 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. |
| Ulcers in the mouth 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">› 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 or mouthwashes without alcohol found in stores. Gargle 4 times a day – after every meal and at bedtime. Do not drink or eat for one hour after you gargle.› If you notice ulcers, redness or painful areas in your mouth, contact a member of your healthcare team. |

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| You may sometimes experience diarrhea . | <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 hours.› If you have with diarrhea with fever, contact immediately a member of your health care team or go to Emergency Room. |
| Your skin may become more sensitive to the sun . | <ul style="list-style-type: none">› Avoid going into the sun.› Use sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher.› Wear a hat. |
| A skin rash , usually mild, may occur following your treatment. It generally involves the hands and feet and sometimes the arms, face and chest. It might be associated with itchiness. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">› Consult a member of your healthcare team who will recommend appropriate measures. |
| Rare adverse effects that can be severe or serious to communicate quickly to your doctor | |
| If you experience cough and/or shortness of breath . | <ul style="list-style-type: none">› Contact a member of your healthcare team as soon as possible or go to Emergency Room. |
| This medication may cause severe headaches, loss of consciousness, convulsions and hallucinations . | <ul style="list-style-type: none">› Go immediately to Emergency Room immediately. |

Special Considerations

- › Hospital visits to do blood tests following your treatment are very important and will be very frequent.
- › Verify with a member of your healthcare team before taking medications. Some antibiotics, anti-inflammatories such as ibuprofen (Advil[®], Motrin[®]) and naproxen (Aleve[®]) may modify the effect of your treatment and increase side effects.
- › 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)