

Chemotherapy Instructions

Chemotherapy drugs are medications used to treat cancer. They are strong medications and may have side effects. There are some side effects which may be dangerous and need to be treated right away. There are some things you can do to reduce the side effects or discomfort you have from them. These instructions will tell you when to call your health care team and how to take care of yourself after chemotherapy.

Your chemotherapy treatment is: Truxima (Rituximab), Bendamustine

YOU NEED TO CALL IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE ANY OF THESE PROBLEMS:

- Fever greater than 100.4 F or chills even without a fever
- Severe headache or changes in your ability to think
- New chest pain or swelling in arm, neck, or chest
- Blood in your urine
- Blood (bright red, black, or coffee-ground-appearing) or pus in stools
- Any other unexplained bleeding or bruising, for example, from gums or nose or cough, shortness of breath
- Redness, swelling, drainage, or pain with any vein or venous access device (Hickman/PICC/Port-a Cath)

YOU NEED TO CALL WITHIN 24 HOURS IF YOU HAVE ANY OF THESE PROBLEMS:

- Diarrhea/loose bowel movements – more than 5 times daily
- Cough which brings up yellow and/or green sputum
- Burning or pain when you pass water
- Constipation – no bowel movement in 3 days
- Nausea – unable to eat or drink for more than 8 hours – or vomiting uncontrolled by prescribed medications
- Sore throat, new mouth or lip sores
- New abdominal pain or cramping
- New skin breakdown

Physicians: Neil Schacht, MD
Boris Darovsky, M.D., Ph.D.

Office Nurses: Wanda Berkley, LPN
Debbie DeJarnette, LPN

Nurse Practitioners: Michelle Gibson, MSN, NP-BC, AOCNP
Kelly Smith, MSN, NP-C

Office: 434-517-8140

Infusion Center 434-517-3563
Hospital: 434-517-3100

Infusion Center: Cender Brandon, RN-C
Priscilla Fontaine, RN, BSN

Common side effects of many chemotherapy drugs are:

infection	hair loss or thinning
bleeding	changes in appetite
nausea/vomiting	changes in bowel patterns
fatigue	changes in sexuality
mouth sores	

To reduce your risk of infection when your white blood count is low:

- avoid crowded areas, persons with colds, fever, or a cough, and children exposed to contagious illness or recently vaccinated
- wash your hands frequently
- urinate after sexual activity or avoid sexual activity if instructed by your doctor

To reduce your risk of bleeding when your platelet count is low:

- avoid injury from bumps or falls
- avoid or take extra care with knives and razors
- avoid straining during bowel movements
- avoid medications which contain aspirin or ibuprofen

To decrease nausea and vomiting after chemotherapy:

- take anti-nausea medicine as prescribed
- avoid strong and unpleasant odors and fried or acidic foods
- try frequent sips of fluid and small meals of crackers or other bland, room temperature foods
- rinse mouth frequently
- use distraction or relaxation strategies

To reduce risk of mouth sores:

- use soft bristled toothbrush, keep mouth clean
- rinse mouth with non-alcohol based mouthwashes
- Biotene products such as: dry mouth oral rinse, dry mouth moisturizing gel and Biotene toothpaste

To decrease fatigue:

- save your energy for what is most important to you
- alternate activity with rest periods
- avoid stress, use relaxation strategies
- drink plenty of liquids and eat as well as you can
- get regular exercise at whatever level is appropriate for you

To cope with hair loss or thinning:

- if you have long hair, consider cutting it shorter if hair loss is expected with your treatment
- select a wig or other head covering before hair loss appears

To cope with changes in appetite:

- get light exercise 15 to 30 minutes before mealtime
- eat with other people in a pleasant environment, if possible
- select smaller servings, more frequently
- experiment with a variety of foods, as chemotherapy may change your taste for some foods

To manage changes in bowel patterns:

Constipation-

- drink plenty of fluids
- eat foods high in fiber such as beans, grains, fruits and vegetables, if you can tolerate them
- use prunes, prune juice, hot tea, or hot lemon water to stimulate the bowels
- get regular exercise at whatever level is appropriate
- use an oral laxative that includes a stool softener and a stimulant

Diarrhea-

- replace lost fluids with clear liquids, served cold or at room temperature
- avoid milk products and caffeine
- eat several small meals rather than three large ones; add foods which decrease diarrhea such as bananas, rice, applesauce, toast, mashed potatoes, eggs, fish, cottage cheese, and yogurt
- avoid foods which cause gas, foods which are very acidic, and fatty or fried foods
- increase foods which contain potassium, such as apricot or peach nectar, bananas, mashed or baked potatoes

To manage changes in sexuality:

- talk about feelings and concerns with your partner
 - explore ways of touching and being held that can provide pleasure when sexual activities are limited
 - plan for uninterrupted time when your time and attention can be on one another
 - women may need water-based vaginal lubricants if dryness is a problem
 - avoid pregnancy during the time that either partner is receiving chemotherapy
 - avoid contact with body fluids 48 hours after chemotherapy given
-

What To Do If You Get A Fever While On Chemotherapy

Why This is Very Important:

When you are undergoing treatment for cancer, you may develop a weakened immune system. You may also have a fever. When you have a fever while your immune system is weakened, this is called *febrile neutropenia* or *neutropenic fever*.

It is very important that you take your temperature if you think you might have a fever.

If you have a fever, you will need to call your cancer doctor (oncologist) and go to a Sentara emergency room.

As an extra precaution, please carry the card attached with you. If you develop a fever and need to go to the emergency room, show this card at registration. There are steps in place for you to receive care immediately.

Keep this card with you at all times.

When visiting a Sentara emergency room, show this card at registration. Your oncologist will fill in the back of the card with a phone number.

Neutropenic Risk

Hospital Medical Alert

Please Use Neutropenic Fever Protocols



If you have recently received chemotherapy OR you know your blood counts are low, **and your temperature is equal to or greater than 100.4°F or 38.0°C** please follow these important steps:

1. Call your doctor immediately

- Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. call your primary oncologist's office.
- All other times, call:

2. Go to a Sentara emergency room and show this card to the receptionist, nurse and physician (unless instructed differently).

- Emergency Staff: Please see ED: Neutropenic Fever Order Set and Notify Physician to Start Antibiotics in 1 hour.



Sentara.com/cancer

Your community, not-for-profit health partner