



Provincial Health Services Authority

## For the Patient: GIOCTLAR

Symptomatic management of functional carcinoid and neuroendocrine tumours of the GI tract using Octreotide [long acting](#)

**GI** = GastroIntestinal

**OCT** = Octreotide

**LAR** = Long Acting Release

### **ABOUT THIS MEDICATION**

#### **What is this drug used for?**

- Octreotide is a hormone drug that is used to treat tumours of the GI tract that grow from the neuroendocrine cells. Neuroendocrine cells are cells in your body that produce hormones after stimulation from the nervous system.

#### **How does this drug work?**

- Octreotide works by mimicking a naturally occurring hormone in your body and helps manage the symptoms of your cancer, such as reducing diarrhea, flushing and wheezing.

### **INTENDED BENEFITS**

- You are being asked to take octreotide as a treatment to manage the symptoms of your cancer.

### **TREATMENT SUMMARY**

#### **How is this drug given?**

- Octreotide is given as an **injection** into the muscle. It is usually given once every 4 weeks, or once a month, as this is a [long acting release](#) form of octreotide.
- Your doctor may start you on a short acting form of octreotide that is given as a daily injection under the skin. You may be on this daily injection for a period of time before switching to the long acting form.
- The first injection is usually given to you at the cancer clinic by a nurse. Please ask your nurse where your following injections are to be given. Many people have their injections given to them by their family doctor or a home care nurse, but some people come back to the cancer clinic. Please pick up additional injections from either the cancer clinic or community hospital pharmacy before receiving your injection.
- Please stay on schedule for your injections. It will not do any harm if a dose is a few days late, but your symptoms may reappear until you are back on schedule.

**The calendar on the following page outlines your overall treatment plan.**

C Y C L E	DATE	TREATMENT PLAN
		▶ Week 1 → <a href="#">Octreotide</a> injection on Day 1
		▶ Week 2 → no treatment
	1	▶ Week 3 → no treatment
		▶ Week 4 → no treatment

C Y C L E	DATE	TREATMENT PLAN
		▶ Week 1 → <a href="#">Octreotide</a> injection on Day 1
		▶ Week 2 → no treatment
	2	▶ Week 3 → no treatment
		▶ Week 4 → no treatment

Treatment is continued as long as you are benefitting from treatment and not having too many side effects, as determined by your oncologist.

#### What will happen when I get my drugs?

- A **blood test** may be taken from time to time. The dose and timing of your octreotide may be changed based on the test results and/or other side effects.

#### SIDE EFFECTS AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM

Unexpected and unlikely side effects can occur with any drug treatment. The ones listed below are particularly important for you to be aware of as they are directly related to the common actions of the drug in your treatment plan.

You doctor will review the risks of treatment and possible side effects with you before starting treatment. The chemotherapy nurse will review possible side effects of the drug and how to manage those side effects with you on the day you receive your first treatment.

SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT	MANAGEMENT
<b>Stinging, tingling or burning</b> at the injection site sometimes occurs and rarely lasts more than 15-60 minutes. <b>Pain or tenderness</b> may occur where the needle was placed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take the solution out of the refrigerator and allow it to warm to room temperature (eg, 30-60 minutes) before injection. Do not heat the solution as this may destroy the octreotide.</li> <li>• After injection, rub the spot gently.</li> <li>• If pain or tenderness continues, apply cool compresses or soak in cool water for 15-20 minutes several times a day.</li> </ul>

SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT	MANAGEMENT
<p><b>Nausea</b> may occur after your treatment. Most people have little or no nausea. Nausea usually stops 2-3 weeks after you start using octreotide as your body adjusts to the drug.</p>	<p>To help nausea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time the daily injections of regular octreotide between meals or at bedtime.</li> <li>• Drink plenty of liquids.</li> <li>• Eat and drink often in small amounts.</li> </ul> <p>Try the ideas in <b><i>Practical Tips to Help Manage Nausea*</i></b></p>
<p>Octreotide is used to reduce or prevent diarrhea in some types of cancer. <b>Diarrhea</b> may occur in patients treated for other types of cancer. With the monthly injection, diarrhea is usually mild and often disappears within 1-4 days of the injection.</p>	<p>To help diarrhea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time daily injections of regular octreotide between meals or at bedtime.</li> <li>• Drink plenty of liquids.</li> <li>• Eat and drink often in small amounts.</li> </ul> <p>Avoid high fibre foods as outlined in <b><i>Food Ideas to Help Manage Diarrhea*</i></b></p>
<p><b>Abdominal discomfort</b> may occur.</p>	<p>To help abdominal discomfort:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time daily injections of regular octreotide between meals or at bedtime.</li> <li>• Abdominal discomfort with the monthly injection is usually mild and often disappears within 1-4 days of the injection.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Headache</b> may occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take acetaminophen (eg, TYLENOL®) to decrease or stop headache.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sugar control</b> may be affected in diabetics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check your blood sugar regularly if you are diabetic.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Dizziness</b> sometimes occurs when you first start using octreotide.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This usually improves as your body adjusts to octreotide.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tiredness</b> and lack of energy may occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired.</li> <li>• Try the ideas in <i>Your bank of energy savings: How people with cancer can handle fatigue.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Hair loss is rare</b> with octreotide. Your hair will grow back once you stop treatment with octreotide. Colour and texture may change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a gentle shampoo and soft brush.</li> <li>• Care should be taken with use of hair spray, bleaches, dyes and perms.</li> </ul>

**\*Please ask your chemotherapy nurse, pharmacist or dietician for a copy.**

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PATIENT**

- Tell your doctor if you have **gallstones** now, or have had them in the past, as you may develop gallstones when you are using octreotide.
- **Store** octreotide out of the reach of children, in the refrigerator (do not freeze), and protected from light. Daily injections can be kept at room temperature for up to two weeks. Monthly injections can be kept at room temperature on the day of the injection but should only be mixed immediately before injection.
- **Use** octreotide exactly as directed by your doctor. Make sure you understand the directions and feel comfortable with the injections.
  - Use a different site for each injection. Daily injections are injected under the skin and monthly injections are injected into a muscle. Check with your nurse or doctor to find out which sites on your body can be used for injections.
  - For daily injections: time the injections between meals or at bedtime to avoid stomach upset and abdominal discomfort.
  - Take the ampules or vials out of the refrigerator and allow them to warm to room temperature (eg, 30-60 minutes) before injection. Do not heat the ampules or vials.
  - Use each syringe only once to avoid infection. Place used syringes in a rigid plastic container with a lid. Discard container as instructed by your treatment centre. Keep out of reach of children.
- For **daily** injections: if you **miss a dose**, inject it as soon as you can. If it is less than 2 hours until your next dose, skip the next dose and then go back to your usual dosing times. Your symptoms may reappear until you are back on schedule.
- For **monthly** injections: if you **miss a dose**, arrange for it to be injected as soon as possible. It will not do any harm if a dose is a few days late, but your symptoms may reappear until you are back on schedule.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of octreotide.
- The effect of octreotide on fertility and pregnancy is not known. It is best to use **birth control** while being treated with octreotide. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breast feed during treatment.
- **Tell** doctors, dentists, and other health professionals that you are being treated with octreotide before you receive any treatment from them.

## **Medication Interactions**

Other drugs such as bromocriptine (eg, PARLODEL®), cimetidine (eg, TAGAMET®) cyclosporine (NEORAL®), insulin, and some heart medications (eg, beta blockers) may **interact** with octreotide. Tell your doctor if you are taking these or any other drugs as you may need extra blood tests or your dose may need to be changed. If you are diabetic, your doctor may need to adjust your antidiabetic treatment.

Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start taking any new drugs.

**THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS VERY IMPORTANT**

**STOP USING OCTREOTIDE AND SEE YOUR DOCTOR OR GET EMERGENCY HELP IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE:**

- Signs of an **allergic reaction** (rare) soon after a treatment including dizziness, fast heartbeat, face swelling or breathing problems.
- Signs of **heart problems** such as fast, slow or uneven heartbeat.

**SEE YOUR DOCTOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (DURING OFFICE HOURS) IF YOU HAVE:**

- Signs of **gallstones** such as stomach pain or abdominal discomfort, fever, nausea and vomiting
- Signs of **high blood sugar** such as drowsiness, dry mouth, flushed and dry skin, fruit-like breath odor, increased urination, appetite loss, rapid deep breathing, unusual thirst, rapid weight loss.
- Signs of **low blood sugar** such as anxious feeling, chills, cool and pale skin, difficulty thinking, headache, hunger, shakiness, sweating, fainting, unusual tiredness or weakness.
- Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-coloured stools.

**CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CONTINUE OR BOTHER YOU:**

- Uncontrolled nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or constipation.
- Stomach pain or abdominal discomfort.
- For diabetics: uncontrolled blood sugars.
- Headache not controlled with acetaminophen.
- Redness, swelling, pain or sores where the needle was placed.
- Swelling of feet or lower legs.
- Ringing in your ears or hearing problems.
- Sudden change in vision.

**If you experience symptoms or changes in your body that have not been described above but worry you, or if any symptoms are severe, contact:**

\_\_\_\_\_ at telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_