



Provincial Health Services Authority

For the Patient: GIPE

Palliative therapy of neuroendocrine tumours using Cisplatin and Etoposide

GI = GastroIntestinal

P = Cisplatin

E = Etoposide

ABOUT THIS MEDICATION

What are these drugs used for?

- Cisplatin and etoposide are drugs used to treat neuroendocrine tumours of the gastrointestinal tract.

How do these drugs work?

- Cisplatin and etoposide work by interfering with dividing cells and preventing an increase in the number of cancer cells.

INTENDED BENEFITS

- This therapy is being given to destroy and/or limit the growth of cancer cells in your body. This treatment may improve your current symptoms, and delay the onset of new symptoms.
- It may take several treatments before your doctor can judge whether or not this treatment is helping.

TREATMENT SUMMARY

How are these drugs given?

- Cisplatin and etoposide are given directly into the vein (IV).
- You will receive cisplatin and etoposide at the clinic by the chemotherapy nurse for **three days** in a row. You will then be given a rest period of 18 days.
- This 21-day or 3 week time period is called a “cycle”. The cycles are repeated as long as you are benefiting from treatment and not having too many side effects, as determined by your oncologist. Dose and timing of your treatment may be changed depending on how the chemotherapy affects you.
- Each treatment will take **about 2 hours**. Your first treatment will probably take longer, as the nurse will review information on the chemotherapy drugs with you.

The calendar on the following page shows how the medications are given each 3 week cycle.

| C Y C L E | DATE | TREATMENT PLAN |
|-----------------------|------|--|
| | | ▶ Week 1 → cisplatin IV x 3 days + etoposide IV x 3 days |
| | | ▶ Week 2 → no treatment |
| | 1 | ▶ Week 3 → no treatment |

| C Y C L E | DATE | TREATMENT PLAN |
|-----------------------|------|--|
| | | ▶ Week 1 → cisplatin IV x 3 days + etoposide IV x 3 days |
| | | ▶ Week 2 → no treatment |
| | 2 | ▶ Week 3 → no treatment |

Cycles are 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** is done each cycle, on or before the first day of each treatment cycle. The dose and timing of your chemotherapy may be changed based on your blood counts and/or other side effects.
- You will have been given a prescription for **anti-nausea medication** (to be filled at your regular community pharmacy) that you bring in each time for your treatment. Your chemo nurse will tell you when to take the anti-nausea medication. It is easier to prevent nausea than to treat it once it has occurred, so follow directions closely.
- Your doctor may ask you to **drink water** on the morning of your treatment (2 – 3 cups). Following your treatment your doctor may ask you to drink plenty of liquids (8 – 12 cups a day). This helps prevent kidney problems.

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 drugs in your treatment plan.

Your 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 cisplatin and etoposide, and how to manage those side effects with you on the day you receive your first treatment.

| SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT | MANAGEMENT |
|---|--|
| Allergic reactions may very rarely occur. Signs of an allergic reaction are dizziness, feeling faint, confusion, shortness of breath, and wheezing. This may occur immediately or several hours after receiving the drugs. It can occur after the first dose, or after many doses. | Tell your nurse if this happens while you are receiving the drugs or contact your doctor immediately if this happens after you leave the clinic. |

| SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT | MANAGEMENT |
|---|--|
| Cisplatin and etoposide both burn if the drug leaks under the skin. | Tell your nurse or doctor <i>immediately</i> if you feel burning, stinging, or any other change while the drug is being given. |
| <p>Nausea and vomiting may occur after your treatment and may last for up to 24 hours. Nausea may last longer for some patients (i.e. delayed nausea and vomiting).</p> | <p>You will be given a prescription for anti-nausea drug(s) to take before your chemotherapy treatment and/or at home. It is easier to prevent nausea than treat it once it has occurred, so follow directions closely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink plenty of liquids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Try the ideas in <i>Practical Tips to Manage Nausea</i>* <p>Your doctor may manage delayed nausea and vomiting differently. Be sure to let your doctor know if you experience this.</p> |
| Your white blood cells will decrease 1-2 weeks after your treatment. They usually return to normal 3 weeks after your last treatment. White blood cells protect your body by fighting bacteria (germs) that cause infection. When they are low, you are at greater risk of having an infection. | <p>To help prevent infection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash your hands often and always after using the bathroom. • Take care of your skin and mouth. • Avoid crowds and people who are sick. • Call your doctor <i>immediately</i> at the first sign of an infection such as fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer), chills, cough, or burning when you pass urine. |

| OTHER SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT | MANAGEMENT |
|--|--|
| Dizziness or feeling faint may occur during administration of IV etoposide. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell your nurse or doctor <i>immediately</i>. • Lie down or sit with your feet elevated. |
| Pain or tenderness may occur where the needle was placed. | Apply cool compresses or soak in cool water for 15 – 20 minutes several times a day. |

| OTHER SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT | MANAGEMENT |
|---|---|
| <p>Diarrhea may occur.</p> | <p>To help diarrhea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink plenty of liquids • Eat and drink often in small amounts. <p>Eat low fibre food & avoid high fibre foods as outline in <i>Food choices to Help Manage Diarrhea</i>. *</p> <p>If you have an increase of less than 4 stools per day more than normal, or a mild increase in ostomy output, start the following: Loperamide (IMODIUM®) 2 mg, take 2 tablets (4 mg) to start, followed by 1 tablet (2 mg) every 4 hours, or after each unformed stool to a maximum of 8 tablets (16 mg) daily, unless otherwise directed by a physician.</p> |
| <p>Your platelets may decrease during or after your treatment. They will return to normal after your last treatment. Platelets help to make your blood clot when you hurt yourself. You may bruise or bleed more easily than usual.</p> | <p>To help prevent bleeding problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try not to bruise, cut, or burn yourself. • Clean your nose by blowing gently. Do not pick your nose. • Avoid constipation. • Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush as your gums may bleed more easily. Maintain good oral hygiene. <p>Some medications such as ASA (e.g. ASPIRIN®) or ibuprofen (e.g. ADVIL®) may increase your risk of bleeding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not stop taking any medication that has been prescribed by your doctor (e.g. ASA for your heart). • For minor pain, try acetaminophen (e.g. TYLENOL®) first, but occasional use of ibuprofen may be acceptable. |
| <p>Sore mouth may occur commonly during treatment. Mouth sores can occur on the tongue, the sides of the mouth or in the throat. Mouth sores or bleeding gums can lead to an infection.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brush your teeth gently after eating and at bedtime with a very soft toothbrush. If your gums bleed, use gauze instead of a brush. Use baking soda instead of toothpaste. • Make a mouthwash with ½ teaspoon baking soda or salt in 1 cup warm water and rinse several times a day. • Try soft, bland foods like puddings, milkshakes and cream soups. • Avoid spicy, crunchy or acidic food, and very hot or cold foods. • Try ideas in <i>Food Ideas to Try with a Sore Mouth</i>. * |

| OTHER SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT | MANAGEMENT |
|--|---|
| Hair loss is common and may begin within a few days or weeks of treatment. Your hair may thin or you may become totally bald. Your scalp may feel tender. You may lose hair on your face and body. Your hair will grow back once your treatments are over and sometime between treatments. Colour and texture may change. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a gentle shampoo and soft brush. • Care should be taken with use of hair spray, bleaches, dyes and perms. • If hair loss is a problem, refer to <i>For the Patient: Hair Loss Due to Chemotherapy</i>*. |
| Loss of appetite and weight loss may occur. | Try the ideas in Food Ideas to Help with Decreased Appetite * |
| Taste alteration may occur. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try ideas in Food Ideas to Cope with Taste and Smell Changes* |
| Constipation may occur. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise if you can. • Drink plenty of fluids (8 cups a day). • Try ideas in Food Choices to Help Manage Constipation* |
| Tiredness and lack of energy may occur. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired. • Try the ideas in the handout titled <i>Fatigue/Tiredness</i>* |

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

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PATIENT

- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or **allergic reaction** to cisplatin or etoposide before receiving treatment with either drug.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of cisplatin or etoposide.
- Your doctor may ask you to take a **hearing test** before and at various times during your treatment with cisplatin. This helps to detect hearing problems.
- Cisplatin and etoposide may cause **sterility** in men and **menopause** in women. If you plan to have children, discuss this with your doctor before being treated with fluorouracil and cisplatin.
- Cisplatin and etoposide may damage sperm in males and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to **use birth control** while being treated with these drugs, and for six months after your last treatment. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breast feed during treatment.
- **Tell** doctors or dentists that you are being treated with fluorouracil and cisplatin before you receive any dental treatment.

Medication Interactions

Other drugs may **interact** with cisplatin, such as furosemide (LASIX®), phenytoin (DILANTIN®), pyridoxine, and some antibiotics given by vein (e.g. tobramycin, vancomycin). Other drugs such as atovaquone (MEPRONE®), warfarin (COUMADIN®), glucosamine and St. John's Wort may interact with etoposide. 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. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start taking any new drugs.

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS VERY IMPORTANT

SEE YOUR DOCTOR OR GET EMERGENCY HELP IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of an **allergic reaction** (rare) soon after a treatment including dizziness, fast heart beat, face swelling or breathing problems.
- Signs of an **infection** such as fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer); chills, cough, pain or burning when you pass urine
- Signs of **bleeding problems** such as black, tarry stools, blood in urine, pinpoint red spots on skin, extensive bruising.
- Signs of a **stroke** such as sudden onset of: severe headache, eyesight changes, slurred speech, loss of coordination, weakness or numbness in arm or leg.
- Signs of a **blood clot** such as tenderness or hardness over a vein, calf swelling and tenderness, sudden onset of cough, chest pain or shortness of breath
- **Seizures** or **loss of consciousness**.
- **Uncontrolled nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.**

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

- **Muscle weakness**
- Signs of **kidney problems** such as lower back or side pain, swelling of feet or lower legs.
- Signs of **anemia** such as unusual tiredness or weakness.
- **Numbness** or tingling in feet or hands.

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

- Easy bruising or minor bleeding.
- Redness, swelling, pain, or sores where the needle was placed.
- Redness, swelling, pain, or sores on your lips, tongue, mouth, or throat.
- Ringing in your ears or hearing problems.
- Skin rash or itching.

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: _____