



Provincial Health Services Authority

## For the Patient: GIAVRALOX

Other Names: Palliative Treatment of Metastatic Colorectal Cancer Using Oxaliplatin and Raltitrexed in Patients Intolerant to Fluorouracil or Capecitabine

**GI** = GastroIntestinal  
**AV** = Advanced  
**RALOX** = Raltitrexed, Oxaliplatin

### ABOUT THIS MEDICATION

#### What are these drugs used for?

- Oxaliplatin and raltitrexed are drugs given to treat cancer of the colon or rectum.

#### How do these drugs work?

- Both oxaliplatin and raltitrexed 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.

### TREATMENT SUMMARY

#### How are these drugs given?

- Oxaliplatin and raltitrexed are given directly into the vein (IV). They will be given to you at the clinic by a chemotherapy nurse. Each treatment will take about **about 3 hours**. Your first treatment will probably take longer, as the nurse will review information on the chemotherapy drug with you.
- The treatment is repeated every 3 weeks. This 3 week or 21-day period of time is called a “cycle”.

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 → oxaliplatin and raltitrexed IV x 1 day
		Week 2 → No Treatment
		Week 3 → No Treatment

**Treatment is continued as long as you are benefiting 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

## 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 oxaliplatin and raltitrexed and how to manage those side effects with you on the day you receive your first treatment.

SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT	MANAGEMENT
Tell your nurse if you feel like you have <b>difficulty breathing or swallowing</b> during or immediately after your oxaliplatin infusion. This may occur rarely.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These symptoms will disappear in a few hours, and may not require treatment.</li> <li>• If you have these symptoms with a 2-hour infusion, your next treatment may be given over 6 hours.</li> </ul>
<b>Allergic reactions</b> may <b>rarely</b> 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.
Oxaliplatin <b>burns</b> if it leaks under the skin.	Tell your nurse or doctor immediately if you feel burning, stinging, or any other change while the drug is being given.
<b>Nausea and vomiting</b> may occur after your oxaliplatin treatment and may last for 24- 48 hours. Nausea and vomiting may also occur 2-3 days after your raltitrexed treatment.	You may be given a prescription for an 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink plenty of liquids.</li> <li>• Eat and drink often in small amounts.</li> </ul> Try the ideas in <i>Practical Tips to Help Manage Nausea</i> .*

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MANAGEMENT</b></p>
<p>You may feel <b>tingling or a loss of feeling in your hands, feet, nose, or throat</b>. They may be made worse by exposure to <b>cold</b>. This is very common after oxaliplatin treatment. These problems often disappear after a few hours or days.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid cold air if possible.</li> <li>• Protect yourself from the cold, which can cause or worsen these symptoms. Wear gloves, socks, and something that covers your mouth and nose when outside in cold weather.</li> <li>• Do not drink cold beverages or eat cold food for a few days after treatment.</li> <li>• If symptoms continue for more than a week, or interfere with how your hands work, talk to your doctor.</li> <li>• Try the ideas in <i>Coping With/Preventing Oxaliplatin Cold Dysesthesias*</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Diarrhea</b> may occur.</p>	<p>To help diarrhea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink plenty of liquids.</li> <li>• Eat and drink often in small amounts.</li> <li>• Avoid high fibre foods as outlined in <i>Food Ideas to Help Manage Diarrhea*</i>.</li> </ul> <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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul> <p>Call your cancer doctor if you have four stools a day more than usual or diarrhea during the night, or a moderate increase in ostomy output.</p>
<p>Your <b>white blood cells</b> 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, <b>you are at greater risk of having an infection</b>.</p>	<p>To help prevent infection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wash your hands often and always after using the bathroom.</li> <li>• Take care of your skin and mouth.</li> <li>• Avoid crowds and people who are sick.</li> <li>• Call your doctor <b>immediately</b> 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.</li> </ul>

OTHER SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT	MANAGEMENT
<b>Pain or tenderness</b> may occur where the needle was placed.	Apply warm compresses or soak in warm water for 15-20 minutes several times a day.
<b>Fever</b> may commonly occur shortly after treatment with oxaliplatin and a <b>flu-like illness</b> may occur shortly after treatment with raltitrexed. You may have fever, chills, headache, muscle aches and joint aches. Flu-like symptoms usually disappear on their own. Fever should last no longer than 24 hours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take acetaminophen (e.g. TYLENOL®) every 3-4 hours.</li> <li>• Fever which occurs more than 48 hours after treatment maybe the sign of an infection. They should be reported to the doctor immediately. See details under <b>Serious Side Effects</b> above.</li> </ul>
Your <b>platelets</b> may decrease during or after your treatment. They will return to normal after your last treatment. This is common. Platelets help to make your blood clot when you hurt yourself. <b>You may bruise or bleed more easily than usual.</b>	<p>To help prevent bleeding problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try not to bruise, cut, or burn yourself.</li> <li>• Clean your nose by blowing gently. Do not pick your nose.</li> <li>• Avoid constipation.</li> <li>• Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush as your gums may bleed more easily. Maintain good oral hygiene.</li> </ul> <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"> <li>• Do not stop taking any medication that has been prescribed by your doctor (e.g. <b>ASA for your heart</b>).</li> <li>• For minor pain, try acetaminophen (e.g. TYLENOL®) first, but occasional use of ibuprofen may be acceptable.</li> </ul>
<b>Sore mouth</b> may occur during treatment. Mouth sores can occur on the tongue, the sides of the mouth or in the throat. <b>Mouth sores or bleeding gums can lead to an infection.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Make a mouthwash with ½ teaspoon baking soda or salt in 1 cup warm water and rinse several times a day.</li> <li>• Try soft, bland foods like puddings, milkshakes and cream soups.</li> <li>• Avoid spicy, crunchy or acidic food, and very hot or cold foods.</li> <li>• Try ideas in <i>Food Ideas to Try with a Sore Mouth*</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>Tiredness</b> , fatigue and lack of energy may occur. As the number of treatment cycles increase, fatigue may get worse.	<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 the handout titled <i>Fatigue/Tiredness*</i>.</li> </ul>

OTHER SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT	MANAGEMENT
<p><b>Hair loss is rare</b> with oxaliplatin and raltitrexed. Your hair will grow back once you stop treatment. 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> <li>• If hair loss is a problem, refer to <i>Resources for Hair Loss and Appearance Changes*</i>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Abnormal heart rhythm</b> (QT prolongation) rarely occurs.</p>	<p>Minimize your risk of abnormal heart rhythm by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always checking with your pharmacist and doctor about drug interactions when starting a new medication, herbal product, or supplement.</li> <li>• Tell your doctor immediately or get emergency help if your heart is beating irregularly or fast, or if you feel faint, lightheaded, or dizzy.</li> </ul>

\*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 (PLATINOL®) or carboplatin (PARAPLATIN®) before starting oxaliplatin treatment.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of oxaliplatin or raltitrexed.
- Oxaliplatin and raltitrexed may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to **use birth control** while being treated with these drugs, and for 6 months following the last raltitrexed 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 oxaliplatin and raltitrexed before you receive any dental treatment.

**Medication Interactions**

- Other drugs such as folic acid, leucovorin (folinic acid) or vitamin preparations containing folic acid or leucovorin may interact with raltitrexed. Do not take these products the day before or on the day of your raltitrexed treatment. 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 **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.
- Signs of **heart or lung problems** such as fast or uneven heartbeat, chest pain, chest pressure, shortness of breath or difficulty in breathing, swelling of ankles, or fainting.
- Signs of an **allergic reaction** (rare) soon after a treatment including dizziness, fast heart beat, face swelling, or breathing problems.
- **Seizures** or **loss of consciousness** with or without **confusion, headache, or changes in eyesight.**

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

- **Diarrhea** with four stools a day more than usual, or diarrhea during the night.
- **Nausea** that causes you to eat a lot less than usual or **vomiting** more than 2 times in 24 hours.
- **Painful redness, swelling or sores on your lips, tongue, mouth or throat.**
- Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-coloured stools.
- Signs of **anemia** such as unusual tiredness or weakness.
- **Severe abdominal or stomach cramping or pain.**

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

- Painless redness, swelling or sores on your lips, tongue, mouth or throat.
- Uncontrolled nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, diarrhea or constipation.
- Skin rash, itching, or peeling.
- Heartburn; mild to moderate abdominal or stomach pain.
- Easy bruising or minor bleeding.
- Tingling or a loss of feeling in your hands, feet, nose or throat
- Redness, swelling, pain or sores where the needle was placed.
- Watery, irritated eyes.

**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: \_\_\_\_\_