



Provincial Health Services Authority

For the Patient: GUAVD

Palliative Therapy for Advanced Adrenal Cortical Cancer
Using DOXOrubicin

GU = Genito**U**rinary

AV = Ad**V**anced

D = Doxorubicin

ABOUT THIS MEDICATION

What are these drugs used for?

- Doxorubicin (ADRIAMYCIN®) is a drug that is used to treat adrenal gland cancer.

How do these drugs work?

- Doxorubicin 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 or prevent the onset of new symptoms.

TREATMENT SUMMARY

How are these drugs given?

- Doxorubicin is a red liquid that is injected into a vein.
- This treatment is repeated every 3 weeks. This makes up 1 cycle of treatment, and will be repeated for additional cycles depending on your response to the chemotherapy.

What will happen when I get my drugs?

- A blood test may be taken before each treatment. The dose and timing of your chemotherapy may be changed based on the test results and/or other side effects
- Bring your anti-nausea pills with you to take before each treatment. You will also need to take your anti-nausea drugs at home after therapy. It is easier to prevent nausea than treat it once it has occurred, so follow directions closely.

Changes in blood counts

This drug may cause temporary changes in your blood counts. Your doctor will be following these changes carefully by performing blood tests. Adjustment of your treatment may be needed in certain circumstances.

BLOOD COUNTS	MANAGEMENT
<p>Normal 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>	<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 immediately 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.
<p>Normal platelets help your blood to clot normally after an injury (e.g., cut). When the platelet count is low you may be more likely to bruise or bleed.</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.

SIDE EFFECTS AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM

Your doctor will review the risks of treatment and possible side effects with you before starting treatment.

Side effects for **DOXORUBICIN** are listed in the following table in the order in which they may occur. Tips to help manage the side effects are included.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<p>Doxorubicin burns if it leaks under the skin.</p>	<p>Tell your nurse or doctor immediately if you feel burning, stinging or any other change while the drug is being given.</p>
<p>Your urine may be pink or reddish for 1-2 days after your treatment.</p>	<p>This is expected as doxorubicin is red and is passed in your urine.</p>

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<p>Nausea and vomiting may occur after your treatment and usually ends within 24 hours.</p>	<p>You may 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.
<p>Pain or tenderness may occur where the needle was placed.</p>	<p>Apply cool compresses or soak in cool water for 15-20 minutes several times a day.</p>
<p>Diarrhea may occur.</p>	<p>If diarrhea is a problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink plenty of fluids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Avoid high fibre foods
<p>Sore mouth may occur a few days after 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 ¼ teaspoon baking soda AND ¼ teaspoon salt in 1 cup warm water and rinse several times a day. • You can also request a prescription for Magic Mouthwash from your doctor.
<p>Your skin may darken in some areas such as your nails, soles or palms.</p>	<p>This will slowly return to normal once you stop treatment with doxorubicin.</p>
<p>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 sometimes between treatments. Colour and texture may change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply mineral oil to your scalp to reduce itching. • If you lose your eyelashes and eyebrows, protect your eyes from dust and grit with a broad-rimmed hat and glasses.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<p>Loss of appetite and weight loss are common and may persist long after discontinuation of doxorubicin.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat often and chose high calorie, high protein foods. Try a few mouthfuls even if you are not hungry. • Eat what you feel like eating. It is okay to eat the same foods over and over again if only a few foods appeal to you. • Eat your biggest meal when your appetite is best.

INSTUCTIONS FOR THE PATIENT:

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

- Signs of **heart problems** such as fast or uneven heartbeat, chest pain, chest pressure, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, swelling of ankles or fainting.
- 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 or stools; pinpoint red spots on skin, extensive bruising.
- Signs of an **allergic reaction** (rare) soon after a treatment including dizziness, fast heart beat, face swelling or breathing problems.

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

- Severe **skin reaction** where you have had radiation.
- Signs of **gout** such as joint pain.
- **Changes in eyesight.**
- **Skin rash** or **itching.**

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

- Uncontrolled nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.
- 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.

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 _____