



Provincial Health Services Authority

## For the Patient: GDP

Other names: LYGDP

**G** Gemcitabine  
**D** Dexamethasone (taken by mouth)  
**P** CISPlatin or CARBOplatin

### Uses:

- GDP is a drug treatment given for Non-Hodgkins and Hodgkin Lymphoma with the expectation of destroying cancer cells.
- GDP is currently offered to patients with aggressive (fast-growing) Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma and to patients with relapsed or refractory Hodgkin Lymphoma
- Cisplatin and Gemcitabine are offered to people who have good kidney function and a good performance status. Performance status is a measure of how well a person is able to perform their usual daily activities.

### Treatment Plan:

- Your treatment plan consists of several (up to 6) chemotherapy cycles. Each cycle lasts 3 weeks (21 days). For each cycle you will have two drugs given intravenously (through the vein), plus a drug called dexamethasone taken as a pill by mouth.
- You will receive treatment on two separate days (Day 1 and 8). On day 1, you will receive gemcitabine and CISplatin or CARBOplatin. The gemcitabine is given first, and is given intravenously over half-an-hour (30 minutes.)
- You will then be given extra fluids intravenously for one hour (60 minutes) before the CISplatin. This is to help flush out your kidneys. The CISplatin will be given last, and is given intravenously over one hour (60 minutes). **Extra intravenous fluids are not needed if you are on CARBOplatin.**
- On Day 8 of each cycle, you will receive gemcitabine, intravenously over half-an hour (30 minutes) and you may receive CISplatin if a dose modification is needed.
- You will take the oral medication, dexamethasone, daily with food for the first four days of each cycle.
- The day before each scheduled chemo treatment you will have a blood test and an appointment with your nurse and/or doctor to assess how you have tolerated your treatment.

### Drugs:

- Three chemotherapy drugs (gemcitabine, dexamethasone and CISplatin or CARBOplatin) will be given at each cycle. All drugs except the dexamethasone are given by injection into a vein.
- You will be given an oral medication (dexamethasone) to start on Day 1 and you will need to take this daily with food for a total of 4 days (Day 1-4).

- You will also be given a prescription for anti-nausea pills to help prevent nausea and vomiting. .
- A blood test will be taken prior to each cycle of treatment (every 3 weeks). The timing or the dose of chemotherapy may be changed based on your blood tests and/or other side effects.

### **Instructions:**

- Bring your anti-nausea drugs with you to take before each IV treatment. The nurse will instruct you when to take your pills. You may also need to take anti-nausea pills at home after the chemotherapy. It is easier to prevent nausea than treat it once it has occurred, so follow directions closely.
- Call your cancer doctor immediately (day or night) at the first sign of any infection but especially if you have a fever over 38C or 100F.
- Other drugs such as some antibiotics given by vein (eg: tobramycin, vancomycin), furosemide (LASIX®), phenytoin (DILANTIN®), ethacrynic acid (EDECIN®), pyridoxine (Vitamin B6), warfarin (COUMADIN®), and blood pressure medications may interact with GDP. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start taking any new drugs.
- **Drink** 8-12 cups of liquid a day on the day of your treatment and the day after your treatment. This helps prevent kidney problems.
- Avoid grapefruit juice for 48 hours before, and on the day of your treatment.
- You may drink small amounts of alcohol, as it will not affect the safety or effectiveness of your treatment. Drinking alcohol may increase the risk of some side effects of dexamethasone; discuss this with your doctor or pharmacist.
- Tell other doctors or dentists that you are being treated with GDP chemotherapy before you receive any treatment from them.
- Use effective contraception (birth control) if you could become pregnant or if your partner could become pregnant. Becoming pregnant while on chemotherapy will likely harm the baby. Do not breast feed.

### **Serious Side Effects:**

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

- **Infection:** The number of white blood cells that help fight infections will be lowered by the treatment. Your blood count is expected to return to normal by Day 1 of the next cycle. If your white blood cell count becomes very low you could get a serious infection. **If you have a fever over 38°C or 100°F, call your cancer doctor immediately or go to the nearest Hospital Emergency and tell them that you are on chemotherapy. It is recommended you have a working thermometer at home.**

- **Bleeding Problems:** If you develop black tarry stools, blood in your urine, pinpoint red spots on the skin, or prolonged nose bleeds report them immediately to your doctor or nurse.

### **Common Side Effects and Management:**

<b>SIDE EFFECTS</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT</b>
<p><b>Allergic reactions</b> may <b>rarely</b> occur. Signs of an allergic reaction are dizziness, confusion and wheezing or difficulty breathing.</p> <p>This reaction can occur immediately or several hours after receiving CISplatin, or after many doses of CISplatin.</p>	<p>Tell your nurse if this happens while you are receiving CISplatin. Go to your local Emergency Room immediately if this happens after you leave the clinic.</p>
<p>CISplatin <b>burns</b> if it leaks under the skin.</p>	<p>Tell your nurse <b><i>immediately</i></b> if you feel pain, burning, stinging, or any other change while the drug is being given.</p>
<p><b>Pain or tenderness</b> may occur where the needle was placed in your vein within 1-2 days after treatment. This may extend all the way up the arm. Sometimes pain may occur where the cancer is located.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply warm compresses or soak in warm water for 15-20 minutes several times a day.</li> <li>• For pain, take acetaminophen (eg: Tylenol®).</li> </ul> <p><i>See your doctor if the pain continues to bother you.</i></p>
<p><b>Nausea and vomiting</b> can occur with this treatment and you will need to take anti-nausea medications before and after your chemotherapy.</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 to treat it once it has happened, so follow directions closely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink plenty of liquids.</li> <li>• Eat and drink often in small amounts.</li> <li>• Try the ideas in <a href="#"><i>“Practical Tips to Manage Nausea”</i></a>.</li> <li>• Be sure to let your doctor know if you have nausea or vomiting later than 24 hours after your treatment.</li> </ul>

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<p>Your <b>white blood cells</b> may decrease 7-10 days after your treatment. They usually return to normal 2-3 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 by gently washing regularly.</li> <li>• Avoid crowds and people who are sick.</li> </ul> <p>Call your doctor <b>immediately</b> at the first sign of an <b>infection</b> such as fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer), chills, cough or burning when you pass urine.</p>
<p>Your <b>platelets</b> may decrease 6-13 days after your treatment. They will return to normal with time. Platelets help your blood clot if you cut yourself. <b>You may bruise or bleed more easily than usual.</b></p>	<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>• Avoid ASA (eg, ASPIRIN®) unless recommended by your doctor.</li> <li>• For minor pain use acetaminophen (TYLENOL®). Take your temperature prior to taking acetaminophen-containing products.</li> <li>• Do not take common painkillers such as ibuprofen (eg, ADVIL®, MOTRIN®)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Constipation</b> or <b>diarrhea</b> may occur.</p>	<p>To help constipation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise if you can.</li> <li>• Drink plenty of liquids (8 cups a day).</li> <li>• Try ideas in “<i>Suggestions for Dealing with Constipation</i>”.</li> </ul> <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 with Diarrhea during Chemotherapy</i>”.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hair loss</b> sometimes occurs. If there is hair loss, 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>• Refer to the pamphlet For the Patient: “<i>Hair loss due to chemotherapy</i>”</li> </ul>

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<p><b>Sore mouth</b> 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"> <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>• Call your doctor if you are having difficulty eating or drinking due to pain.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Skin rash</b> may occur after treatment with Gemcitabine. It is usually mild and is found on the arms, legs, chest, back or stomach. It may or may not be itchy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply hydrocortisone cream 0.5% sparingly 3-4 times daily.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fatigue</b> is common especially in the first 1-2 weeks after your treatment. As the number of cycles increases fatigue may get worse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your energy level should slowly improve (weeks – months) after your final treatment is completed.</li> <li>• Refer to the <a href="#">Fatigue/Tiredness patient handout</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>Numbness or tingling</b> of the fingers or toes may occur. This will slowly return to normal once your treatments are over. This may take several months.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be careful when handling items that are sharp, hot or cold.</li> <li>• Tell your doctor at your next visit, especially if you have trouble with buttons, writing, or picking up small objects.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Swelling</b> of hands, feet or lower legs may occur if your body retains extra fluid.</p>	<p>If swelling is a problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elevate your feet when resting</li> <li>• Avoid tight clothing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sugar control</b> may be affected in people with diabetes.</p>	<p>Check your blood sugar regularly if you are diabetic. See your doctor if you have signs of blood sugar problems such as thirst and frequent need to pass urine.</p>

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<p><b>Increased energy and difficulty sleeping</b> may be due to dexamethasone.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The days you take your dexamethasone you may feel as though you have extra energy.</li> <li>• You may also have difficulty sleeping at night.</li> <li>• Take the dexamethasone first thing in the morning to prevent insomnia at night.</li> </ul>

**If you experience symptoms or changes in your body that have not been described above but worry you, tell your doctor about them at the time of your next visit. If you have symptoms that are severe, contact:**

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

**If you have symptoms that are severe or need emergency services, go to your local hospital's Emergency Department.**