



Provincial Health Services Authority

For the Patient: HNSAVFUP

Treatment for Advanced Head and Neck Cancer using 5-Fluorouracil and Cisplatin

HN = Head and Neck (Tumour group)

S = Salivary Gland cancer

AV = Advanced

FU = 5-Fluorouracil

P = Platinum (Cisplatin)

ABOUT THIS MEDICATION

What are these drugs used for?

Fluorouracil (flure-oh-yoor'-a-sill) and cisplatin (sis-PLAT-in) are drugs used to treat many types of cancer. They are clear liquids that are injected into a vein.

How do these drugs work?

Fluorouracil and cisplatin interfere with the genetic material, DNA and RNA, of cancer cells to prevent their growth. The result is the cancer cell dies.

INTENDED BENEFITS

- This therapy is given to destroy and/or limit the growth of cancer cells in your body.
- It is expected to improve your current symptoms, and delay or prevent the new symptoms from starting.
- This treatment is expected to delay the progression of your cancer.

HNSAVFUP TREATMENT SUMMARY

How are these drugs given?

- Cisplatin is given intravenously once a day for 3 to 4 days. This is repeated every 4 weeks.
- You will receive **fluorouracil** at the clinic by the chemotherapy nurse on **day 1 and day 3** of your treatment. The fluorouracil is given using **TWO** disposable infusion devices called an **INFUSOR®** or "baby bottle". Each infusion device delivers the fluorouracil slowly and continuously to your body **over 48 hours or 2 days**. Please see a copy of "*Your INFUSOR® - A Guide for Patients*", available through your chemotherapy nurse. This is repeated every 4 weeks.
- The chemotherapy nurse will connect the infusion device to your IV site at the clinic, and then you can go about your normal pattern of living, while your **FIRST** fluorouracil infusor device delivers treatment over the 48 hours or 2 days. You will return to clinic on day 3. The **SECOND** infusion device will be connected to your IV site by the chemotherapy nurse. You can go home while your fluorouracil treatment is delivered over the next 48 hours. Total time period of IV fluorouracil infusion is 96 hours or 4 days. You may return to the clinic after 4 days for the nurse to disconnect the infusion device, or you will be instructed how to disconnect yourself at home. Some people may be instructed to go to their local hospital to be disconnected, or may have a home care nurse provide this service, if available.
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- Each 4 week period is called a cycle. This may be repeated for 6 cycles.

What will happen when I get my drugs?

- A blood test is done within one month of starting treatment.
- A blood test is done before each treatment cycle. You will be given lab requisitions for these tests to be done on a specific date. The dose and timing of your chemotherapy may be changed based on your blood counts and/or other side effects.
- You will be given prescriptions to prevent nausea; please have these filled at your regular pharmacy and bring them in with you each time for treatment. Your 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 the suggestions given to you.

HNSAVFUP Treatment Protocol

Cycle 1:

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Cisplatin and Fluorouracil	Cisplatin Fluorouracil	Cisplatin Fluorouracil	(Cisplatin) Fluorouracil	no chemo	no chemo	no chemo
Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	Day 11	Day 12	Day 13	Day 14
no chemo	no chemo	no chemo	no chemo	no chemo	no chemo	no chemo
Day 15	Day 16	Day 17	Day 18	Day 19	Day 20	Day 21
no chemo	no chemo	no chemo	no chemo	no chemo	no chemo	no chemo
Day 22	Day 23	Day 24	Day 25	Day 26	Day 27	Day 28
no chemo	no chemo	no chemo	no chemo	no chemo	no chemo	no chemo
Day 29 = Day 1						
Start cycle 2						

This 28-day cycle may repeat 5 more times.

CHEMOTHERAPY SIDE EFFECTS AND MANAGEMENT

Are there any risks?

Unexpected and unlikely side effects can occur with any drug treatment. The ones listed in the following tables 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.

SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS	HOW COMMON IS IT?	MANAGEMENT
When your white blood cells are low, you are at greater risk of having an infection . White blood cells protect your body by fighting bacteria (germs) that cause infection.	Common	To help prevent infection: <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 infection such as fever (over 38°C or 100°F by an oral thermometer), chills, cough, or burning when you pass urine.
When your platelets are low, you are at greater risk of bruising or bleeding more easily than usual .	Common	To help prevent bleeding problems: <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. • Some medications such as ASA (e.g. Aspirin®) or ibuprofen (e.g. ADVIL®) may increase your risk of bleeding. • Many natural health products may increase your risk of bleeding. • Do not stop taking any medication prescribed by your doctor (e.g., ASA for your heart) • For minor pain, try acetaminophen (TYLENOL®) first, but occasional use of ibuprofen is acceptable.
Signs of heart problems such as chest pain or fast or uneven heartbeat.	rare	Contact your oncologist immediately if this happens to you.
Pain or tenderness may occur where the needle was placed.	rare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell your nurse or doctor immediately if you feel burning, stinging, or any other change while the drug is being given. • Apply cool compresses or soak in cool water for 15-20 minutes several times a day.

OTHER SIDE EFFECTS	HOW COMMON IS IT?	MANAGEMENT
<p>Nausea and vomiting may occur after your treatment and may last for 24 hours. Nausea may last longer for some patients.</p>	<p>very common</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. Drink plenty of liquids. Eat and drink often in small amounts. Try the ideas in Food Choices to Help Control Nausea</p>
<p>Diarrhea may commonly occur.</p>	<p>common</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. <p>Avoid high fibre foods as outlined in Food Ideas to Help Manage Diarrhea</p>
<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>	<p>uncommon</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. <p>Try the ideas in <i>Food Ideas for a Sore Mouth During Chemotherapy</i>.*</p>
<p>Hair loss may occur. If you lose hair, it will grow back once you stop treatment. Colour and texture may change.</p>	<p>rare</p>	<p>If hair loss is a problem, refer to <i>For the Patient: Hair Loss Due to Chemotherapy</i>.*</p>
<p>Changes in hearing may occur.</p>	<p>common</p>	<p>Contact your doctor if you notice ringing in your ears or any changes in your hearing.</p>
<p>Tiredness and lack of energy may occur.</p>	<p>common</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired. <p>Try the ideas in <i>Your Bank to Energy Savings: Helping People with Cancer Handle Fatigue</i>.*</p>

OTHER SIDE EFFECTS	HOW COMMON IS IT?	MANAGEMENT
Your skin may sunburn more easily than usual.	rare	To help prevent sunburn: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid direct sunlight. • Wear a hat, long sleeves and long pants or skirt outside on sunny days. • Apply a sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of at least 30. • Refer to Sun sensitivity and sunscreens for more information.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PATIENT

- It is important for you to **drink plenty of water** on the day of your treatment and for a few days following your treatment. This will prevent kidney problems.

What other drugs can interact with cisplatin and 5-fluorouracil?

- Other drugs such as phenytoin (DILANTIN®), warfarin (COUMADIN®) or some drugs that affect the kidneys may interact with 5-fluorouracil and cisplatin.

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 prescriptions, non-prescription or natural health products.

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), shaking chills; severe sore throat, productive cough (coughing up thick or green sputum); cloudy or foul smelling urine; painful, tender, or swollen red skin wounds or sores.
- Signs of **bleeding problems** such as black, tarry stools; blood in urine; 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.
- Signs of **heart or lung problems** such as fast or uneven heartbeat, chest pain, chest pressure, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, swelling of ankles or fainting.
- 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.

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

- **Hand-foot skin reaction** such as painful redness, peeling, numbness, swelling or blistering of the palms of your hands and/or bottoms of your feet.
- Signs of **kidney problems** such as lower back or side pain, swelling of feet or lower legs.
- **Uncontrolled nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.**
- Numbness or tingling in feet or hands or painful leg cramps.
- Redness, swelling, pain, or sores where the needle was placed.

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

- Easy bruising or minor bleeding.
- Signs of anemia such as unusual tiredness or weakness.
- Dizziness or trouble walking.
- Eye irritation or changes in eyesight.

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

_____ at telephone number: _____