



Provincial Health Services Authority

For the Patient: SMAVCET

Other Names: Third line treatment of Treatment of Locally Advanced or Metastatic Cutaneous Squamous Cell Carcinoma using Cetuximab

SM = **S**kin and **M**elanoma

AV = **AdV**anced

CET = **CET**uximab

ABOUT THIS MEDICATION

What is this drug used for?

- Cetuximab is a drug given to treat squamous cell carcinoma.

How does this drug work?

- Cetuximab (se tux' i mab) is a monoclonal antibody, a type of protein designed to target and interfere with the growth 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 is this drug given?

- Cetuximab is given directly into the vein, intravenously (IV), once per week.
- Your first treatment will last about three hours. Treatments after your first one will last one to two hours. The first treatment is longer because the cetuximab is given more slowly and over a longer period of time, to make sure your body will accept the drug without any reaction. Usually, after the first treatment, the cetuximab can be given faster and over a shorter period of time.
- The treatment is repeated every week. The treatment is usually repeated 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 drug?

- A blood test is done before each treatment. The dose and timing of your treatment 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.

A member of your healthcare team will review the risks of treatment and possible side effects with you before starting treatment. The chemotherapy nurse will review possible side effects of the drugs and how to manage those side effects with you on the day you receive your first treatment.

SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT	MANAGEMENT
Chills, fever and swelling commonly occur during the first cetuximab infusions. You may also experience shivering, problems breathing, dizziness, headache, or hoarseness. Reactions are less common with later treatments.	Tell your nurse or healthcare team immediately if you have a reaction during your treatment. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your cetuximab may be temporarily stopped and then given more slowly.• You may be given other drugs to treat the reaction.
Nausea and vomiting may occur after your treatment. If you are vomiting and it is not controlled, you can quickly become dehydrated. Most people have little or no nausea.	You may be given a prescription for anti-nausea drugs(s) to take before your 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">• Drink plenty of fluids• Eat and drink often in small amounts• Try the ideas in <i>Practical Tips to Manage Nausea</i>.*

SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT	MANAGEMENT
<p>Skin reactions such as acne, rash, dryness or itchiness commonly occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid direct sunlight and tanning salons during treatment and for 2 months following treatment. • Wear a hat, long sleeves, and long pants outside on sunny days. • Wear a sunscreen that blocks both UVA and UVB and has a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30. Apply liberally, 30 minutes before exposure. Reapply every 2 hours and after swimming. • Frequent moisturizing with alcohol-free emollient creams is recommended. • Do not use over-the counter acne preparations. • Your doctor may prescribe a topical cream or oral antibiotic to manage the acne-like rash. • Refer to <i>Your Medication Sun Sensitivity and Sunscreens*</i> or the <i>BC Health Guide</i> for more information • If skin reaction persists or get worse, call your healthcare team. Otherwise, be sure to mention it at your next visit.

OTHER SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT	MANAGEMENT
<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>Nail changes, especially of the big toes and thumbs, may occur.</p>	<p>If nails are painful, you may take acetaminophen (e.g. TYLENOL®) every 4 – 6 hours to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day or ibuprofen (e.g. ADVIL®) for mild to moderate pain. Tell your healthcare team if the pain interferes with your activity. Otherwise, be sure to mention it at your next visit.</p>

OTHER SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT	MANAGEMENT
Diarrhea may sometimes occur.	If diarrhea is a problem: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink plenty of fluids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Avoid high fibre foods as outlined in Food Choices to Help Manage Diarrhea.* Tell your healthcare team if you have diarrhea for more than 24 hours.
Constipation may sometimes occur.	Exercise if you can. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink plenty of fluids. • Try ideas in Food Choices to Manage Constipation.*
Levels of magnesium may decrease.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your magnesium levels will be monitored by your healthcare team prior to each treatment. • Your doctor may recommend magnesium replacement if it is low. Magnesium replacement can be given by mouth, and is sometimes also given as an IV infusion.
Increased bone pain may sometimes occur.	You may take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day or ibuprofen (e.g., ADVIL®) for mild to moderate pain. Tell your healthcare team if the pain interferes with your activity.
Swelling of hands feet or lower legs may occur if your body retains extra fluid.	If swelling is a problem: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevate your feet when sitting. • Avoid tight clothing.
Headache may sometimes occur.	Take acetaminophen (e.g. TYLENOL®) every 4 – 6 hours if needed, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day.
You may have trouble sleeping.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to your healthcare team if your trouble in sleeping continues to bother you. • This will return to normal when you stop treatment with cetuximab.
Loss of appetite and weight loss are common.	Try the ideas in Food Ideas to Help with Decreased Appetite.*
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 Fatigue/Tiredness- patient handout*

OTHER SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT	MANAGEMENT
<p>Hair loss is rare with cetuximab. If you lose hair, it will grow back once you stop treatment with cetuximab. Colour and texture may change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If hair loss is a problem, refer to Resources for Hair Loss and Appearance Changes – Patient Handout.*

***Please ask a member of your healthcare team for a copy**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PATIENT

- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or **allergic reaction** to cetuximab or another monoclonal antibody before starting this treatment.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of cetuximab.
- Cetuximab may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use **birth control** while being treated with cetuximab. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breast feed during treatment.
- **Tell** doctors, dentists and other health professionals that you are being treated with cetuximab before you receive any treatment from them.

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS VERY IMPORTANT

CHECK WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM OR GET EMERGENCY HELP IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of an **allergic reaction** soon after a treatment including fever, dizziness, fast heart beat, face swelling, chills or breathing problems.
- 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 feet or lower legs, or fainting.
- **Seizures** or **loss of consciousness**.
- Signs of an **infection** such as fever (over 38°C or 100°F or 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.

CHECK WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (DURING OFFICE HOURS) IF YOU HAVE:

- Severe skin reaction, including the area around the nails that is painful, red, or swollen.
- Unusual tiredness or weakness.
- Signs of liver problems such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-coloured stools.
- Signs of kidney problems such as lower back or side pain, swelling of feet or lower legs.
- Numbness or tingling in feet or hands.
- Changes in eyesight, eye pain, sensitivity to light, or severe eye redness.

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

- Uncontrolled nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, constipation, loss of appetite or weight loss.
- Dry mouth or increased thirst.
- Headache or other pain not controlled with acetaminophen (e.g., **TYLENOL®**).
- Redness, swelling, pain, or sores on your lips, tongue, mouth, or throat.
- Skin rash or dry, itchy skin.
- Easy bruising or minor bleeding.
- Changes to eyelashes or eyebrow hair
- Confusion, anxiety or depression, or trouble sleeping.

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: _____