



Provincial Health Services Authority

For the Patient: GIGAVTR

Other Names: Palliative treatment of metastatic or inoperable, locally advanced stomach or stomach-esophageal junction cancer using Trastuzumab

GI = Gastrointestinal

G = Gastric (or stomach)

AV = Advanced

TR = Trastuzumab

ABOUT THIS MEDICATION

What is this drug used for?

- Trastuzumab is a drug used to treat cancer of the stomach and esophagus. It is a drug given directly into the vein (IV).

How does this drug work?

- Trastuzumab works by helping your immune system to interfere with how cancer cells grow and divide.

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.
- It may take several treatments before your doctor can judge whether or not this treatment is helping.

TREATMENT SUMMARY

How is this drug given?

- Trastuzumab is given directly into the vein (IV).
- You will receive trastuzumab at the clinic by the chemotherapy nurse on the first day of treatment for **one day only**. You will then have a 20 day rest period. This three week or 21-day period of time is called a “cycle”. The cycles are repeated as long as your body responds to the treatment and you are not having too many side effects, as determined by your medical oncologist.
- Your treatment will take **about 2 hours**. This includes 30 minutes for the drug to drip into your body, or what is called an “infusion”. This is then followed by a 60 minute observation time, to ensure that the drug does not cause any infusion related side effects. If your body does not experience any infusion related side effects, the observation time may be shortened to only 30 minutes, as determined by your chemotherapy nurse. Your first treatment may take longer, as the chemotherapy nurse will review information on the chemotherapy drugs and infusion device with you.

The calendar on the following page shows how the medication is given each 3 week cycle.

C Y C L E	DATE	TREATMENT PLAN
		▶ Week 1 → Trastuzumab on Day 1
		▶ Week 2 → no treatment
	1	▶ Week 3 → no treatment

C Y C L E	DATE	TREATMENT PLAN
		▶ Week 1 → Trastuzumab on Day 1
		▶ Week 2 → no treatment
	2	▶ Week 3 → no treatment

Treatment is continued as long as you are benefiting from treatment and not having too many side effects.

What will happen when I get my drugs?

- A **blood test** is done at the beginning of treatment. Additional blood tests may be ordered by your oncologist throughout the course of treatment.
- A test to determine how well your **heart** is working, called a “MUGA” scan, will be done at the beginning of treatment.
- The dose and timing of your chemotherapy may be changed based on your test results 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 drug in your treatment plan.

You 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 the drug and how to manage those side effects with you on the day you receive your first treatment.

SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT	MANAGEMENT
Allergic reactions may rarely occur. Signs of an allergic reaction may include chills, fever, shivering, nausea, vomiting, headache, dizziness, problems breathing, rash and weakness during the infusion. Reactions are less common with later treatments even if you have a reaction with the first treatment.	Tell your nurse immediately if this happens while you are receiving trastuzumab. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your trastuzumab may be temporarily stopped and then given more slowly when restarted. • You may be given other drugs to treat the reaction. Contact your oncologist immediately if this happens after you leave the clinic.

SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT	MANAGEMENT
<p>Fever, chills, and flu-like illness may rarely occur shortly after treatment with trastuzumab. Fever should last no longer than 24 hours.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day. • Fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer) which occurs more than a few days after treatment may be a sign of an infection. Report this to your doctor immediately.

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>Nausea and vomiting may occur after your treatment. Most people have little or no nausea.</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 fluids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Try the ideas in <i>Practical Tips to Help Manage Nausea*</i>
<p>Headache may sometimes occur.</p>	<p>Take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours if needed, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day.</p>
<p>Hair loss does not occur with trastuzumab.</p>	

* Please ask your chemotherapy nurse, pharmacist or dietician for a copy.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PATIENT

- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or **allergic reaction** to trastuzumab before receiving trastuzumab.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of trastuzumab.
- Trastuzumab may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use **birth control** while being treated with trastuzumab and for at least seven months after treatment has ended. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breastfeed during treatment.
- **Tell** doctors, dentists, and other health professionals that you are being treated with trastuzumab before you receive any treatment from them

Medication Interactions

Other drugs may **interact** with trastuzumab. 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), 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 an **allergic reaction** (rare) soon after a treatment including dizziness, fast heartbeat, face swelling, 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.

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

- Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-coloured stools.
- Increased **sore throat or mouth** that makes it difficult to swallow comfortably.

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

- Constipation, diarrhea, or abdominal discomfort.
- Muscle, joint pain, or headache.
- Nasal congestion or discharge.
- Breast soreness or hot flashes.
- Skin rash or itching.
- Nail changes.
- Trouble sleeping or feelings of depression or nervousness.
- Tiredness, weakness, or lack of energy.
- Weight gain.

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: _____