



Provincial Health Services Authority

## For the Patient: LUSCTOP

Other Names: Treatment of Recurrent Small Cell Lung Cancer (SCLC) with Topotecan

**LU = LU**ng  
**SC = Small Cell**  
**TOP = TOP**otecan

### **ABOUT THIS MEDICATION**

#### **What is this treatment used for?**

LUSCTOP is an intravenous (through the vein) drug treatment used for Small Cell Lung Cancer. The goal of this treatment is to help control or shrink the cancer and some of the symptoms caused by it.

#### **How does this drug work?**

Topotecan is an anticancer drug that works by *interrupting* the dividing and multiplying of cancer cells, and by encouraging the death of cancer cells.

### **INTENDED BENEFITS**

This treatment is being given to slow down the growth of cancer cells in your body. This chemotherapy treatment can help with controlling some of the symptoms the cancer may be causing, such as pain, coughing, wheezing, difficulty swallowing, weight loss and fatigue. This treatment may delay or prevent new symptoms from starting.

### **LUSCTOP TREATMENT SUMMARY**

#### **How is this drug given?**

- Your treatment plan consists of up to 6 chemotherapy “cycles”. Each cycle lasts 3 weeks (21 days). For each cycle, you will have topotecan given to you intravenously over 30 minutes for 5 consecutive days, days 1 to 5.

#### **What will happen when I get the drug?**

- A blood test is done within one month of starting treatment.
- A blood test is also done before Day 1 of each cycle, and once weekly throughout your entire treatment.
- The dose and timing of your chemotherapy may be changed based on your blood test results and/or other side effects.
- Your very first treatment will take longer than other treatments because a nurse will be reviewing the possible side effects of your chemotherapy plan and will discuss with you how to manage them. *It is a good idea to bring someone with you to your first chemotherapy appointment.*
- You will be given a prescription for anti-nausea medications (to be filled at your regular pharmacy). Please bring your anti-nausea medications with you for each treatment. Your nurse will tell you when to take the anti-nausea medication. You may also need to

take your anti-nausea drugs at home after therapy. It is easier to prevent nausea than to treat it once it happens, so follow directions closely.

**LUSCTOP TREATMENT PROTOCOL**

**Start Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cycle 1:**

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
<b>Blood Test Topotecan</b>	<b>Topotecan</b>	<b>Topotecan</b>	<b>Topotecan</b>	<b>Topotecan</b>	No chemo	No chemo
Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	Day 11	Day 12	Day 13	Day 14
<b>Blood Test No chemo</b>	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
<b>Blood Test No Chemo</b>	No chemo	No chemo	No chemo	No chemo	No chemo	No chemo

**This 21-day cycle will repeat up to 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 below are particularly important for you to be aware of.

<b>SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS</b>	<b>How common is it?</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT</b>
<p>Your <b>white blood cells</b> will decrease 1-2 weeks after your treatment. They usually return to normal within 1 week. 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>Very Common</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.</li> <li>• Avoid crowds and people who are sick.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
<p>Your <b>platelets</b> may decrease 2 weeks after your treatment. They usually return to normal within 1 week. Platelets help to make your blood clot when you hurt yourself. <b>You may bruise or bleed more easily than usual.</b></p>	<p>Common</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>• Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush as your gums may bleed more easily. Maintain good oral hygiene.</li> </ul> <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"> <li>• Do not stop taking any medication that has been prescribed by your doctor (e.g. <b>ASA for your heart</b>).</li> <li>• For minor pain, try acetaminophen (e.g. TYLENOL®) first. Occasional use of ibuprofen may be acceptable.</li> </ul>

OTHER SIDE EFFECTS	How Common Is It?	MANAGEMENT
<b>Nausea and vomiting</b> may occur during and after your treatment.	Common	<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 to treat it once it has happened, so follow directions closely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat and drink often in small amounts.</li> <li>• Try the ideas in <i>“Food Choices to Control Nausea”</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>Tiredness</b> and lack of energy may occur.	Common	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired.</li> <li>• Try the ideas in <i>“Your Bank of Energy Savings: How People with Cancer can Handle Fatigue”</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>Hair loss</b> 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.	Common	<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>• Protect your scalp with a hat, scarf or wig in cold weather. Some extended health plans will pay part of the cost of a wig.</li> <li>• Cover your head or apply sunblock on sunny days.</li> <li>• Apply mineral oil to your scalp to reduce itching.</li> <li>• Refer to the pamphlet For the Patient: <i>“Hair loss due to chemotherapy”</i>.</li> </ul>
<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. <b>Mouth sores or bleeding gums can lead to an infection.</b>	Uncommon	<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> </ul>

OTHER SIDE EFFECTS	How Common Is It?	MANAGEMENT
<b>Constipation</b> or <b>diarrhea</b> may occur.	Uncommon	To help constipation: <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> To help diarrhea: <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>
<b>Pain or tenderness</b> may occur where the needle was placed.	Uncommon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply cool compresses or soak in cool water for 15-20 minutes several times a day.</li> </ul>

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PATIENT**

### **What other drugs can interact with LUSCTOP?**

- Other drugs such as phenytoin (DILANTIN®) may interact with topotecan. Tell your doctor if you are on this or any other drugs as you may need extra blood tests, your dose may need to be changed or your treatment may need to be held for a few days.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start taking any new prescription or non-prescription drugs.

### **Other important things to know:**

- The drinking of alcohol (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of this treatment.
- This treatment may damage sperm and may cause harm to the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use *birth control* while you are undergoing treatment. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breast feed during treatment.
- Tell all doctors or dentists you see that you being treated with topotecan before you receive treatment of any form.

### **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); chills, cough, pain or burning when you pass urine.
- Signs of **bleeding problems** such as black, tarry stools; blood in urine or pinpoint red spots on skin.

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

- Signs of **anemia** such as unusual tiredness or weakness.
- **Severe abdominal or stomach cramping or pain.**
- **Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.**

### **CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CONTINUE TO BOTHER YOU:**

- Easy bruising or bleeding.
- Headache not controlled with acetaminophen.
- Uncontrolled nausea, vomiting, constipation or diarrhea.
- Redness, swelling, pain or sores where the needle was placed.
- Redness, swelling, pain or sores on your lips, tongue, mouth or throat.
- Skin rash or itching.
- Aches and pains.

**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 \_\_\_\_\_