

Patient Information Sheet for Breast Cancer Chemotherapy Program

CAFpo

C: Cyclophosphamide

A: Doxorubicin (also known as ADRIAMYCIN®)

F: 5-Fluorouracil

po: oral cyclophosphamide

Indications:

- CAF is a drug treatment given after breast cancer surgery (called adjuvant chemotherapy) in the hope of destroying breast cancer cells that may have spread to other parts of your body. This treatment may reduce the chance of your breast cancer coming back in future years and may improve your overall survival or chance of a cure.
- If you have locally advanced or inflammatory breast cancer, you may receive CAFpo.

General Treatment Plan:

- Your treatment plan consists of 6 chemotherapy cycles. Each cycle is made up of 28 days. For each cycle, 2 drugs, doxorubicin and 5-fluorouracil, will be injected into a vein (IV) in your arm once on day 1 and day 8 of each 28-day cycle for a total of 6 weeks. You will also be asked to take cyclophosphamide pills daily for Days 1 to 14 of each cycle.
- The IV treatment takes about 30-60 minutes. However, on day 1 of each cycle, plan to spend part of that day at your treatment centre for a doctor's appointment and a blood test.
- Drugs:
 - Two drugs, doxorubicin and 5-fluorouracil, are given as an IV injection in your arm on day 1 and day 8 of each 28 day cycle.
 - The third drug, cyclophosphamide, is a pill and is given daily for 14 days starting on day 1 of each cycle. Your treatment centre will provide you with the cyclophosphamide pills.
 - Anti-nausea pills will also be given to help prevent nausea and vomiting during and after chemotherapy. The anti-nausea prescription is filled at your drugstore.
- A blood test is done the day before each cycle, on day 8 of each cycle and once a week during the 6 cycles of chemotherapy. The dose and timing of your chemotherapy may be changed based on your blood counts and/or other side effects. In some cases, radiation therapy and/or tamoxifen may be started after you complete chemotherapy.

Instructions:

- In some cases, a long term catheter may be placed in your arm (called a PICC catheter) or a surgeon may be asked to place a device under your skin which can be accessed by the nurses at each chemotherapy treatment to prevent vein problems.
- You will be instructed to take your anti-nausea drugs before each IV treatment on day 1 and day 8. You also need to take your anti-nausea drugs at home after treatment. It is easier to prevent nausea than treat it once it has occurred, so follow directions closely.

- Take your cyclophosphamide pills at breakfast time (with or without food) with a full glass of water or juice.
- Drink lots of fluids if possible (8 cups a day) especially while taking cyclophosphamide. Try to empty your bladder (pass urine) frequently while awake and at bedtime on the days that you take cyclophosphamide to help prevent bladder problems.
- Call your cancer doctor *immediately* (day or night) at the first sign of any infection but especially if you have a fever over 38°C or 100°F.

Tell doctors or dentists that you are being treated with CAFpo before you receive any treatment from them.

Serious & Important Side Effects:

Note: 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 due to a low blood count.** The number of white blood cells will be lowered by the treatment. White blood cells protect your body by fighting bacteria (germs) that cause infection. Your **white blood cells** will decrease after your treatment. They usually return to normal by day 1 of the next cycle. The chance of a serious infection is almost 5% with CAF. When they are low, **you are at greater risk of having an infection. If you have a fever over 38C or 100F, call your cancer doctor *immediately* (24 hours a day) or go *immediately* to your nearest Hospital Emergency and tell the doctor you are on chemotherapy.**
- **Heart failure (caused by doxorubicin).** There is a less than 2% risk of an effect on the heart causing failure of its pumping action which causes shortness of breath, fatigue and leg swelling.
- **Tissue Injury.** Doxorubicin **burns** if it leaks under the skin. Tell your nurse or doctor *immediately* if you feel burning, stinging or any other change while the drug is being given.
- **Leukemia.** There is a very small risk of developing leukaemia after treatment. The overall benefit in terms of reducing breast cancer recurrence and improving survival are thought to outweigh this risk.
- **Early menopause.** If you are premenopausal (are still having periods), cyclophosphamide may cause your ovaries to stop working, resulting in menopausal symptoms (hot flushing, etc.) and infertility. Your periods may stop. This may be permanent, especially if you are 40 year of age or older.

Common Side Effects & Comments on Management:

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<p>Nausea and vomiting can occur with this treatment and you will need to take anti-nausea drugs at the time of the injections. Cyclophosphamide is a nauseating drug and therefore if you have nausea you may need to take some anti-nausea medicine when you are taking the cyclophosphamide pills. You are unlikely to have vomiting with the cyclophosphamide pills.</p>	<p>You will be given a prescription for anti-nausea drugs to take before your IV treatment and afterwards 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"> ▪ Refer to the following pamphlets: <i>For the Patient: Managing Nausea; Chemotherapy & You; Food choices to help control nausea*</i>.
<p>Weight gain may occur during treatment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is not recommended that you try to lose weight during treatments. If you are feeling well, eat a varied and balanced diet and keep active. Choose lower fat foods if you are eating frequently to relieve nausea. <p>Ask to see a nutritionist or refer to <i>A nutrition guide for women with breast cancer*</i>.</p>
<p>Hair loss (100%). Your hair will fall out 2-4 weeks after treatment begins. 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. The colour and texture of the new hair growth may be different.</p>	<p>Shaving the head may be more comfortable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Avoid hair spray, bleaches, dyes and perms. ▪ Apply mineral oil to your scalp to reduce itching. ▪ If you lose your eyelashes and eyebrows, protect your eyes from dust and grit with a broad-rimmed hat and glasses. ▪ Consider cutting your hair short before it falls out ▪ Ask your nurse about information on wigs and head coverings.
<p>Mouth sores may occur a few days after treatment. Mouth sores can occur on the tongue, gums, and sides of the mouth or in the throat.</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. ▪ Try baking soda mouth rinses (using 1/4 tsp baking soda in 1 cup warm water) and rinse several times a day. Try ideas in <i>Easy to chew, easy to swallow food ideas*</i>. ▪ Tell your doctor about a sore mouth, as your chemotherapy doses may need to be decreased if mouth sores are severe.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Fatigue is common especially in the first week after your treatment. As the number of treatment cycles increase fatigue may get worse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Your energy level will improve with time after treatment is completed. ▪ Refer to pamphlet “<i>Yes I can: How people with cancer can handle fatigue</i>”^{***}.
Injection site pain. Pain or tenderness may occur where the needle was placed and it may extend up the arm.	Apply cool or warm compresses or soak in cool or warm water for 15-20 minutes several times a day.
Irritated and watery eyes can occur.	Use of artificial tears may help your eyes.
You may notice a metallic taste in your mouth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chew gum, suck on a candy or have a strong flavoured drink if the taste is bothersome. ▪ Try baking soda mouth rinses (using 1/4 tsp baking soda in 1 cup water) before or between meals. ▪ Refer to “<i>Coping with taste changes</i>”[*].
Heartburn The drugs can cause a burning sensation in the throat or stomach similar to reflux or indigestion.	<p>To help heartburn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chew gum, suck on a candy or have a strong flavoured drink if the taste is bothersome. ▪ Take cyclophosphamide tablets with food. ▪ Take antacids to relieve heartburn. Take ranitidine 75-150 mg twice a day (available over the counter).
Constipation The ondansetron pills can cause constipation. This is temporary and your bowel movements will return to normal a few days after you finish taking ondansetron.	<p>To help constipation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise if you can. • Drink plenty of fluids (8 cups a day). • Try ideas in <i>Suggestions for Dealing with Constipation</i>.
Changes in cognition. Some patients experience changes in memory and ability to do multiple tasks at one time. The chemotherapy drugs, the support medications and the emotional stress of the diagnosis of cancer all appear to play a role in this.	This appears to be reversible.
<p>Burning on urination or frequency (increased need to urinate may occur due to irritation of the bladder.</p> <p>Your urine may be pink or reddish for 1-2 days after your treatment due to the doxorubicin.</p>	<p>Drink plenty of fluids to keep the urine dilute and empty your bladder often.</p> <p>This is expected as doxorubicin is red and is passed in your urine.</p>

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<p>Your skin may darken in some areas such as your hands, elbows, knees or along your veins.</p>	<p>This will slowly return to normal once you stop treatment.</p>
<p>Pain affecting joints of the hands, knees and feet can occur following chemotherapy.</p>	<p>Your family doctor can help you to manage symptoms of joint pain.</p>
<p>Your skin may sunburn easily during treatment with fluorouracil.</p>	<p>To help prevent sunburn:</p> <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 sun block lotion with a SPF (sun protection factor) of at least 15.

*available only through nursing or nutrition services

** available through your nurse

Other Information:

- Tell your doctor or pharmacist before you start taking any new drugs. Other drugs such as cimetidine (TAGAMET®), phenobarbital, phenytoin (DILANTIN®), warfarin (COUMADIN®), metronidazole (FLAGYL®) and thiazide diuretics (“water pills”) may interact with CAFpo.
- You should use effective **birth control** during treatment with CAFpo if you could become pregnant, but not the birth control pill. Tell your doctor right away if you become pregnant. Do not breast feed during treatment.
- **Drinking small amounts of alcohol** will not affect the safety or usefulness of CAFpo.

If you experience symptoms or changes in your body which have not been described above that worry you or if any symptoms are severe, contact _____ at telephone number _____.