



BC Cancer Agency

For the Patient: GIA

Other Names: Palliative chemotherapy for cancer of the liver (hepatoma) using Doxorubicin

GI = GastroIntestinal

A = ADRIAMYCIN® (also known as doxorubicin)

ABOUT THIS MEDICATION

What is this drug used for?

- Doxorubicin is a drug given to treat cancer of the liver (also known as “hepatoma”). It is given directly into the vein, or intravenously (IV).

How does this drug work?

- Doxorubicin works by interfering with dividing cells and preventing an increase in the number 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.
- It may take several treatments before your doctor can judge whether or not this treatment is helping.

TREATMENT SUMMARY

How is this drug given?

- You will receive one intravenous (IV) chemotherapy drug called doxorubicin. It is a liquid and appears naturally as the colour red. It will be given to you at the clinic by a chemotherapy nurse. Each treatment will take **about 20 minutes**. Your first treatment will probably take longer, as the nurse will review information on the chemotherapy drug with you.
- The treatment is followed by a 20 day rest period. This 3 week or 21-day period of time is called a “cycle”. The cycle may be repeated up to 3 or even 6 cycles, but may be changed depending on how the chemotherapy affects you.

The calendar on the following page outlines your overall treatment plan.

C Y C L E 1	DATE	TREATMENT PLAN
		▶ Week 1 → Doxorubicin IV x 1 day
		Week 2 → No Treatment
		Week 3 → No Treatment

C Y C L E 2	DATE	TREATMENT PLAN
		▶ Week 1 → Doxorubicin IV x 1 day
		Week 2 → No Treatment
		Week 3 → No Treatment

C Y C L E 3	DATE	TREATMENT PLAN
		▶ Week 1 → Doxorubicin IV x 1 day
		Week 2 → No Treatment
		Week 3 → No Treatment

C Y C L E 4	DATE	TREATMENT PLAN
		▶ Week 1 → Doxorubicin IV x 1 day
		Week 2 → No Treatment
		Week 3 → No Treatment

C Y C L E 5	DATE	TREATMENT PLAN
		▶ Week 1 → Doxorubicin IV x 1 day
		Week 2 → No Treatment
		Week 3 → No Treatment

C Y C L E 6	DATE	TREATMENT PLAN
		▶ Week 1 → Doxorubicin IV x 1 day
		Week 2 → No Treatment
		Week 3 → No Treatment

What will happen when I get my drugs?

- A blood test is done each cycle, on or before the first day of each treatment cycle. The dose and timing of your chemotherapy may be changed based on your blood counts and/or other side effects.

Side Effects

- The doctor will review the risks of treatment and possible side effects with you before starting treatment.
- The chemotherapy nurse will review possible side effects and how to manage these side effects with you on the day you receive your first treatment.
- Unexpected and unlikely side effects can occur with any drug treatment. Please refer to the patient information handout titled “***For the Patient: doxorubicin***” for a complete list of possible side effects and their management.

Medication Interactions

- Other drugs such as digoxin (LANOXIN®) and cyclosporine (NEORAL®, SANDIMMUNE®) may interact with doxorubicin. Tell your doctor if you are taking either of 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 drugs. Please refer to “***For the Patient: doxorubicin***”.

If you experience symptoms or changes in your body that have not been described in “*For the Patient: doxorubicin*” but worry you, or in any symptoms are severe, contact:

_____ at telephone number: _____