



**BC Cancer Agency**

## **For the Patient: GIPAJGEM**

Other Names: Adjuvant chemotherapy for pancreatic cancer using Gemcitabine

**GI** = GastroIntesntianl

**P** = Pancreatic

**AJ** = Adjuvant

**GEM** = Gemcitabine

### **ABOUT THIS MEDICATION**

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

- Gemcitabine is a drug given to treat cancer of the pancreas. It is given directly into the vein, or intravenously (IV).

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

- Gemcitabine 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 prevent a recurrence of cancer, improve your current symptoms, and delay the onset of new symptoms.
- “Adjuvant” therapy means this treatment is being given in addition to other types of treatment, such as surgery.

### **TREATMENT SUMMARY**

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

- You will receive one intravenous (IV) chemotherapy drug called gemcitabine. It will be given to you at the clinic by a chemotherapy nurse. Each treatment will take **about 1 hour**. Your first treatment will probably take longer, as the nurse will review information on the chemotherapy drug with you.
- The treatment is repeated every week for 3 weeks in a row, with a 1 week rest period. This 4 week or 28 day period of time is called a “cycle” The cycle is usually repeated up to a maximum of 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 → Gemcitabine IV x 1 day
		▶ Week 2 → Gemcitabine IV x 1 day
		▶ Week 3 → Gemcitabine IV x 1 day
		Week 4 → No Treatment

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

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

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

C Y C L E  5	DATE	TREATMENT PLAN
		▶ Week 1 → Gemcitabine IV x 1 day
		▶ Week 2 → Gemcitabine IV x 1 day
		▶ Week 3 → Gemcitabine IV x 1 day
		Week 4 → No Treatment

C Y C L E  6	DATE	TREATMENT PLAN
		▶ Week 1 → Gemcitabine IV x 1 day
		▶ Week 2 → Gemcitabine IV x 1 day
		▶ Week 3 → Gemcitabine IV x 1 day
	Week 4 → No Treatment	

### What will happen when I get my drugs?

- A blood test is done each week for the first 3 weeks of the cycle, on or before the first day of each treatment. 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: gemcitabine***” for a complete list of possible side effects and their management.

### Medication Interactions

- Other drugs such as warfarin (COUMADIN®) may ***interact*** with gemcitabine. Tell your doctor if you are taking this or 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: gemcitabine***”.

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

\_\_\_\_\_ at telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_