



Provincial Health Services Authority

For the Patient: BRAJPNT

Alternative Adjuvant Therapy for Breast Cancer using Paclitaxel NAB (ABRAXANE) and Trastuzumab

BR = BREast

AJ = AdJuvant

PN = Paclitaxel NAB (ABRAXANE®)

T = Trastuzumab

ABOUT THESE MEDICATIONS

What are these drugs used for?

- Nanoparticle, albumin-bound paclitaxel (paclitaxel NAB) (pak" li tax' el nab) is a drug that is used to treat some types of cancer. It is a liquid that is injected into a vein, intravenously (IV).
- Paclitaxel NAB is a nanoparticle, albumin-bound paclitaxel often referred to as nab-paclitaxel or Abraxane®, which is the brand name of the drug.
- Paclitaxel NAB is used for patients with previous unmanageable hypersensitivity reactions to paclitaxel or docetaxel.
- Trastuzumab (tras too' zoo mab) is a drug that is used to treat some types of cancer. It is a monoclonal antibody, a type of protein designed to target and interfere with the growth of cancer cells. It is a clear liquid that is injected into a vein, intravenously (IV).

How do these drugs work?

- Paclitaxel NAB is an anticancer drug that works by interfering with the genetic material of replicating cells and preventing an increase in the number of cancer cells.
- Trastuzumab helps your immune system to interfere with how cancer cells grow and divide.

TREATMENT SUMMARY

How are these drugs given?

- Your treatment plan consists of chemotherapy 'cycles'. Each cycle lasts 3 weeks (21 days).
- The number of planned cycles will be determined by your oncologist.
- For each cycle, you will have two medications given to you intravenously (through the vein) on day 1.
 - Trastuzumab is given over approximately half-an-hour to one-and-a-half hours (30 to 90 minutes).
 - Paclitaxel NAB is given over approximately half-an-hour (30 minutes)

The calendar outlines your overall treatment plan:

C Y C L E	DATE	TREATMENT PLAN
		► Week 1 → Day 1: Trastuzumab and Paclitaxel NAB
		Week 2 → No chemotherapy
	1	Week 3 → No chemotherapy

This 21-day cycle will repeat until your treatment is completed, as determined by your oncologist.

You will then receive ongoing treatment with trastuzumab to complete one year of trastuzumab treatment.

What will happen when I get my drugs?

- A blood test will be taken before the start of treatment and before each treatment. The dose and timing of your treatment may be changed based on the 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.*

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 drugs in your treatment plan.

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

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Allergic reactions to paclitaxel NAB may rarely occur. Signs of an allergic reaction may include flushing, dizziness, breathing problems, fast or uneven heart beat, or chest pain. This can occur immediately or several hours after receiving paclitaxel NAB.	Tell your nurse if this happens while you are receiving paclitaxel NAB or contact your oncologist immediately if this happens after you leave the clinic.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<p>Allergic reactions to trastuzumab 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.</p>	<p>Tell your nurse immediately if this happens while you are receiving trastuzumab.</p> <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.
<p>Paclitaxel NAB burns if it leaks under the skin.</p>	<p>Tell your nurse or doctor immediately if you feel burning, stinging, or any other change while the drug is being given.</p>
<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 Manage Nausea</i>.*
<p>Fever may sometimes occur.</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
<p>Diarrhea may sometimes occur.</p>	<p>If diarrhea is a problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink plenty of fluids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Avoid high fibre foods as outlined in <i>Food Choices to Help Manage Diarrhea</i>.*
<p>Constipation may sometimes occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise if you can. • Drink plenty of fluids. • Try ideas in <i>Food Choices to Manage Constipation</i>.*

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<p>Your white blood cells may decrease 8-11 days after your treatment with paclitaxel NAB. They usually return to normal 21 days after your last treatment. White blood cells protect your body by fighting bacteria (germs) that cause infection. When they are low, you are at greater risk of having an infection.</p>	<p>To help prevent infection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash your hands often and always after using the bathroom. • Avoid crowds and people who are sick.
<p>Muscle or joint pain may sometimes occur a few days after your treatment.</p>	<p>You may take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day or ibuprofen (e.g., ADVIL®) for mild to moderate pain. Tell your doctor if the pain interferes with your activity.</p>
<p>Swelling of hands, feet, or lower legs may rarely occur if your body retains extra fluid.</p>	<p>If swelling is a problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevate your feet when sitting. • Avoid tight clothing.
<p>Loss of appetite sometimes occurs.</p>	<p>Try the ideas in <i>Food Ideas to Help with Decreased Appetite</i>.*</p>
<p>Tiredness and lack of energy may sometimes occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired. • Try the ideas in <i>Fatigue/Tiredness – Patient Handout</i>.*
<p>Hair loss is common and may begin within a few days or weeks of treatment. Your hair may thin or you may lose it completely. Your scalp may feel tender. Hair loss may occur on your face and body. Hair usually grows back once your treatments are over and sometimes between treatments. Colour and texture may change.</p>	<p>Refer to <i>Resources for Hair Loss and Appearance Changes – Patient Handout</i>.*</p> <p>You may also want to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<p>Numbness or tingling of the fingers or toes commonly occurs. This will slowly (over several weeks) return to normal once your treatments are over.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be careful when handling items that are sharp, hot, or cold. • Tell your doctor at your next visit, especially if you have trouble with buttons, writing, or picking up small objects.
<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>

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

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PATIENT:

- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or **allergic reaction** to trastuzumab, paclitaxel NAB, or human albumin before starting this treatment:
- The drinking of alcohol (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of trastuzumab or paclitaxel NAB.
- Trastuzumab and Paclitaxel NAB may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use **birth control** (but **not** birth control pills) while being treated with these drugs. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breast feed during treatment.
- Tell doctors, dentists, or other health professionals that you are being treated with trastuzumab and paclitaxel NAB before you receive any treatment from them.

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS VERY IMPORTANT

SEE YOUR DOCTOR OR GET EMERGENCY HELP IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of an **allergic reaction** (rare) soon after a treatment including dizziness, fast heart beat, 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 breathing, or fainting.
- 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 **bleeding problems** such as black, tarry stools; blood in urine; pinpoint red spots on skin; extensive bruising.

SEE YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (DURING OFFICE HOURS) IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of **anemia** such as unusual tiredness or weakness.
- **Numbness or tingling** in face, feet, or hands or weakness in facial muscles.
- **Changes in eyesight**, sensitivity to light, or eye pain.
- Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-coloured stools.
- Increased **sore throat or mouth** or that makes it difficult to swallow comfortably.
- Uncontrolled **nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea**.

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 _____