



Provincial Health Services Authority

## For the Patient: GUSCPE

Palliative Therapy of Extensive Stage Genitourinary Small Cell Tumours with a Platinum and Etoposide

**GU = GenitoUrinary**

**SC = Small Cell**

**P = Platinum**

**E = Etoposide**

### **ABOUT THIS MEDICATION**

#### **What are these drugs used for?**

- Etoposide (VPESIDE®, ETOPOPHOS®) is used with Cisplatin (PLATINOL®) or Carboplatin (PARAPLATIN®) to provide palliative treatment for advanced small cell cancers (e.g. in the prostate or bladder).

#### **How do these drugs work?**

- Etoposide with cisplatin or carboplatin work together to limit the growth of cancer and may help reduce your symptoms.

### **TREATMENT SUMMARY**

#### **How are these drugs given?**

- Etoposide and cisplatin/carboplatin are given into a vein (IV).
- Etoposide and cisplatin are given at the clinic on days 1, 2, and 3. Carboplatin is given at the clinic on day 1 only.
- After 21 days from day 1 you will start this “cycle” again. You may receive multiple cycles of treatment depending on the response and/or side effect you experience.

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

- A blood test will be taken before starting treatment and before each cycle. The blood test may also be repeated at anytime during treatment. The dose and timing of your chemotherapy may be changed based on the results of the blood tests and/or other side effects.
- Your doctor may also ask you to take a hearing test before and during treatment with cisplatin.

## **SIDE EFFECTS AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM**

Your doctor will review the risks of treatment and possible side effects with you before starting treatment.

Side effects that can occur with these medications are listed in the following table in the order in which they may occur. Tips to help manage the side effects are included.

<b>SIDE EFFECTS</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT</b>
Etoposide and cisplatin <b>burn</b> if they leak under the skin.	Tell your nurse or doctor <b><i>immediately</i></b> if you feel burning, stinging or any other change while the drug is being given.
<b>Pain or tenderness</b> may occur where the needle was placed.	Apply cool compresses or soak in cool water for 15-20 minutes several times a day.
Your <b>platelets</b> may decrease 3 weeks after your treatment. They usually return to normal 4-5 weeks after your last treatment. Platelets help to make your blood clot when you hurt yourself. <b>You may bruise or bleed more easily than usual.</b>	<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, but occasional use of ibuprofen may be acceptable.</li> </ul>
Your <b>white blood cells</b> will decrease 3-4 weeks after your treatment. They usually return to normal 5 weeks after your last treatment. 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>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><i>immediately</i></b> at the first sign of an infection such as fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer), chills, cough, or burning when you pass urine.</li> </ul>

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<b>Nausea and vomiting</b> may occur after your treatment. Many people have little or no nausea.	You may be given a prescription for antinausea 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink plenty of liquids.</li> <li>• Eat and drink often in small amounts.</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>	<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 ¼ teaspoon baking soda AND ¼ teaspoon 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> <li>• You can also request a prescription for Magic Mouthwash from your doctor.</li> </ul>
<b>Tiredness</b> and lack of energy may occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired.</li> </ul>
<b>Diarrhea</b> may occur.	If diarrhea is a problem: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids.</li> <li>• Eat and drink often in small amounts.</li> </ul>

**Side effects for ETOPOSIDE are listed in the table below:**

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<b>Allergic reactions</b> may rarely occur during or immediately following administration of IV etoposide. Signs of an allergic reaction may include: chest discomfort, shortness of breath, light headedness and flushing.	Tell your nurse or physician <b><i>immediately</i></b> if you experience these or any other side effects while receiving your etoposide.
<b>Dizziness or feeling faint</b> may occur during administration of IV etoposide.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell your nurse or doctor <b><i>immediately</i></b>.</li> <li>• Lie down or sit with your feet elevated.</li> </ul>

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<b>Hair loss is common</b> 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.	Speak to your doctor if this occurs. You may also want to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply mineral oil to your scalp to reduce itching.</li> <li>• If you lose your eyelashes and eyebrows, protect your eyes from dust and grit with a broad-brimmed hat and glasses.</li> </ul>
<b>Loss of appetite</b> and <b>weight loss</b> may occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase high calorie/protein fluids such as full-fat milk, homemade smoothies, nutritional supplements</li> <li>• Limit fluid intake prior to meals</li> <li>• Increase intake of high calorie foods</li> </ul>
<b>Taste</b> alteration may occur.	Speak to your doctor if this occurs.
<b>Constipation</b> may occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise if you can.</li> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids.</li> </ul>

**Side effects for CISIPLATIN are listed in the table below:**

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<b>Allergic reactions</b> may <b>rarely</b> occur. Signs of an allergic reaction are dizziness, confusion and wheezing. This reaction occur immediately or several hours after receiving cisplatin. This reaction can occur after the first dose of cisplatin or after many doses of cisplatin.	Tell your nurse if this happens while you are receiving cisplatin or contact your oncologist immediately if this happens after you leave the clinic.

**INSTUCTIONS FOR THE PATIENT:**

**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; sore throat; pain or burning when you pass urine; redness, pain or swelling of any area of your body; sores forming anywhere on your body.
- Signs of **bleeding problems** such as black, tarry stools; blood in urine; pinpoint red spots on skin, extensive bruising.
- Signs of an **allergic reaction** (rare) soon after a treatment including dizziness, fast heart beat, face swelling or breathing problems.
- Signs of a **stroke** such as sudden onset of: severe headache, eyesight changes, slurred speech, loss of coordination, weakness or numbness in arm or leg.
- Signs of a **blood clot** such as tenderness or hardness over a vein, calf swelling and tenderness, sudden onset of cough, chest pain or shortness of breath.

- **Seizures** or **loss of consciousness**.

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

- Signs of **anemia** such as unusual tiredness or weakness.
- **Numbness** or tingling in feet or hands.
- **Muscle weakness**.
- Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-coloured stools.
- Signs of **kidney problems** such as lower back or side pain, swelling of feet or lower legs.
- Uncontrolled **nausea, vomiting** or diarrhea.
- **Changes in eyesight**.
- Ringing in your ears or **hearing problems**.
- **Skin rash** or **itching**.
- **Stomach pain** not controlled by antacids or acetaminophen.

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