



Provincial Health Services Authority

For the Patient: Oxaliplatin
Other names: ELOXATIN®

- **Oxaliplatin** (OX-ah-lee-plat-in) is a drug that is used to treat cancer. It is a clear liquid that is injected into a vein.
- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or **allergic reaction** to cisplatin (PLATINOL®) or carboplatin (PARAPLATIN®) before starting oxaliplatin treatment.
- A **blood test** may be taken before each treatment. The dose and timing of your chemotherapy may be changed based on the test results and/or other side effects.
- Other drugs may **interact** with oxaliplatin. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start taking any new drugs.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of oxaliplatin.
- Oxaliplatin may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use **birth control** while being treated with oxaliplatin. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breast feed during treatment.
- **Tell** doctors or dentists that you are being treated with oxaliplatin before you receive any treatment from them.

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

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Tell your nurse if you feel like you have difficulty breathing or swallowing during or immediately after your oxaliplatin infusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These symptoms will disappear in a few hours, and may not require treatment. • If you have these symptoms with a 2-hour infusion, your next treatment may be given over 6 hours.
Oxaliplatin 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.
Pain or tenderness may occur where the needle was placed.	Apply warm compresses or soak in warm water for 15-20 minutes several times a day.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<p>Nausea and vomiting may occur after your treatment and may last for 24-48 hours. If you are vomiting and it is not controlled, you can quickly become dehydrated. Some people have little or no nausea.</p>	<p>You may be given a prescription for an 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>.* • Tell your healthcare team if nausea or vomiting continues or is not controlled with your anti-nausea drug(s).
<p>Fever may occur shortly after treatment with oxaliplatin. Fever should last no longer than 24 hours.</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 38°C or 100°F by an oral thermometer) which occurs more than a few days after treatment may be a sign of an infection. Report this to your healthcare team immediately.
<p>Diarrhea may occur. If you have diarrhea and it is not controlled, you can quickly become dehydrated.</p>	<p>If diarrhea is a problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink plenty of liquids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Avoid high fibre foods as outlined in <i>Food Choices to Help Manage Diarrhea</i>.* <p>Tell your healthcare team if you have diarrhea for more than 24 hours</p>
<p>Your white blood cells will decrease 1-2 weeks after your treatment. They usually return to normal 3 weeks 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. • Take care of your skin and mouth. • Avoid crowds and people who are sick. • Call your healthcare team immediately at the first sign of an infection such as fever (over 38°C or 100°F by an oral thermometer), chills, cough, or burning when you pass urine.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<p>Your platelets may decrease 1-2 weeks after your treatment. They usually return to normal 3 weeks after your last treatment. Platelets help to make your blood clot when you hurt yourself. You may bruise or bleed more easily than usual.</p>	<p>To help prevent bleeding problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try not to bruise, cut, or burn yourself. • Clean your nose by blowing gently. Do not pick your nose. • Avoid constipation. • Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush as your gums may bleed more easily. Maintain good oral hygiene. <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"> • Do not stop taking any medication that has been prescribed by your doctor (e.g., ASA for your heart). • For minor pain, try acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) first, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day, but occasional use of ibuprofen may be acceptable.
<p>You may feel tingling or a loss of feeling in your hands, feet, nose, or throat. They may be made worse by exposure to cold. These problems often disappear after a few hours or days.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid cold air if possible. • Protect yourself from the cold, which can cause or worsen these symptoms. Wear gloves, socks, and something that covers your mouth and nose when outside in cold weather. • Do not drink cold beverages or eat cold food for a few days after treatment. • Be careful when walking on uneven surfaces or doing activities that need you to balance or be steady. • Try the ideas in <i>Coping With/Preventing Oxaliplatin Cold Dysesthesias</i>.* <p>Talk to your healthcare team if symptoms continue for more than a week, or you have trouble with buttons, writing, picking up small objects, walking, or have fallen.</p>
<p>Tiredness and lack of energy may 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>.*

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Abnormal heart rhythm (QT prolongation) rarely occurs.	Minimize your risk of abnormal heart rhythm by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • always checking with your pharmacist or doctor about drug interactions when starting a new medication, herbal product, or supplement. Get emergency help immediately if your heart is beating irregularly or fast OR if you feel faint, lightheaded, or dizzy.
Hair loss is rare with oxaliplatin. Your hair will grow back once you stop treatment with oxaliplatin. Colour and texture may change.	If hair loss is a problem, refer to <i>Resources for Hair Loss and Appearance Changes – Patient Handout</i> .*

*Please ask your nurse or pharmacist for a copy.

CHECK WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM OR GET EMERGENCY HELP IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of an **infection** such as fever (over 38°C or 100°F by an oral thermometer); chills; cough; pain or burning when you pass urine.
- Signs of **bleeding problems** such as black, tarry stools; blood in urine; pinpoint red spots on skin.
- Signs of an **allergic reaction** (rare) soon after a treatment including dizziness, fast heart beat, face swelling, or breathing problems.
- **Seizures** or **loss of consciousness** with or without **confusion, headache, or changes in eyesight**.
- Signs of **heart or lung problems** such as fast or uneven heartbeat, chest pain, chest pressure, shortness of breath or difficulty in breathing, swelling of ankles, or fainting.

CHECK WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (DURING OFFICE HOURS) IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of **anemia** such as unusual tiredness or weakness.
- Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-coloured stools.

CHECK WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CONTINUE OR BOTHER YOU:

- Uncontrolled nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.
- Easy bruising or minor bleeding.
- Tingling or a loss of feeling in your hands, feet, nose, or throat.
- Redness, swelling, pain or sores where the needle was placed.
- Redness, swelling, pain or sores on your lips, tongue, mouth or throat.

