For the Patient: Interferon for bladder

Other names: Intron A®, Roferon A®

BC Cancer Agency

- **Interferon** (in-ter-FEAR-on) is a drug that is used to treat many kinds of cancer. It is a man-made version of a substance your body produces naturally to fight infections and tumours. Interferon is a clear liquid that that is given through a small tube into your bladder.

- **Do not drink liquids** for 2 hours before your treatment so your bladder will be empty.

- Your doctor or nurse inserts a **catheter** (small tube) into your bladder and drains out any urine. The interferon is given into your bladder by attaching a syringe to the catheter. The amount given is 50 mL (less than 2 ounces). The catheter is then removed.

- You will be asked to **hold** the interferon in your bladder for as long as possible up to 2 hours after each treatment.
  - Be sure to lie on your stomach for the first 15 minutes after treatment.
  - After lying on your stomach you may be advised to lay on your back for 15 minutes, then on your side for 15 minutes, and then on your other side for 15 minutes.
  - In other cases, after lying on your stomach for 15 minutes you may be advised to get up and move around. In either case this makes sure that the interferon completely covers the inside of your bladder.

- Unless otherwise advised by your doctor you should drink lots of liquids for the next 24 hours. Try to drink at least twelve 250 ml (8 oz.) glasses per day and urinate frequently. This helps prevent bladder problems.

- If you are asked to transport your interferon from your pharmacy to your doctor’s office, **store** it in the refrigerator out of the reach of children. Do not shake interferon vigorously, as it may be damaged. Do not freeze.

- Other drugs such as prednisone (Deltasone®), dexamethasone (Decadron®, Dexasone®, Hexadrol®), ASA (Aspirin®), ibuprofen (Advil®), or vaccines may **interact** with interferon. Tell your doctor if you are taking these or any other drugs as your dose may need to be changed. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start taking any new drugs.

- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) will not affect the safety or usefulness of interferon.
• The effect of interferon on sperm or the baby if used during pregnancy is not known. It is best to use birth control while being treated with interferon. 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 interferon 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIDE EFFECTS</th>
<th>MANAGEMENT</th>
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<tr>
<td>A flu-like illness may occur a few hours after your treatment. You may have a fever, headache, muscle aches and joint aches.</td>
<td>▪ This is a normal and expected reaction. ▪ Go to bed and rest. ▪ Drink plenty of fluids. ▪ Take acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol®) for fever and pain.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interferon can irritate your bladder. You may notice frequent or painful urination, urination at night and some blood or tissue in your urine.</td>
<td>If severe, your next treatment may be decreased or delayed.</td>
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SEE YOUR DOCTOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (DURING OFFICE HOURS) IF YOU HAVE:

• Signs of liver problems such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-coloured stools.
• Fever with chills, headache, muscle and joint aches that do not go away with acetaminophen or that last longer than 2-3 days.
• Severe pain or frequency when passing urine.

REPORT ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS TO YOUR DOCTOR