



## For the Patient: HNNAVPE

Other Names: Treatment of Recurrent and/or Metastatic Nasopharyngeal Cancer with Platinum and Etoposide

**HN** = Head and Neck

**N** = Nasopharyngeal

**AV** = AdVanced

**P** = Platinum

**E** = Etoposide

## ABOUT THIS MEDICATION

### What are these drugs used for?

- Cisplatin, carboplatin and etoposide are intravenous anticancer medications used for many types of cancer.

### How do these drugs work?

- Cisplatin, carboplatin and etoposide interfere with the genetic material, DNA and RNA, of cancer cells to prevent their growth. The result is the cancer cell dies.

## INTENDED BENEFITS

- This therapy is being given to destroy and/or prevent the growth of new cancer cells in your body.
- This treatment may improve your current symptoms, and delay or prevent the onset of new symptoms.
- This treatment is meant to [delay the progression of your cancer](#).

## TREATMENT SUMMARY

### How are these drugs given?

- Cisplatin is given intravenously on days 1 to 3 every three weeks for 4 cycles.
- Etoposide is given intravenously on days 1 to 3 every three weeks for 4 cycles.
- Carboplatin is given in place of cisplatin if your doctor thinks it is a better choice for you. It is given intravenously on day 1 **ONLY** every three weeks for 4 cycles.
- Each cycle is 21 days.

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

- A blood test is done within one month prior to starting your first treatment.
- A blood test is done before day 1 of each cycle. You will be given lab requisitions for these tests. The dose and timing of your chemotherapy may be changed based on your blood counts and / or other side effects.
- You will be given a prescription for anti-nausea medication (filled at your regular pharmacy) that you bring in each time for your treatment. Your nurse will tell you when to take the anti-nausea medication. It is easier to prevent nausea than to treat it once it has occurred, so follow [suggestions given to you](#).

- To prevent nausea, be well-hydrated and eat small meals frequently. Refer to the pamphlet on “Food Choices to Help Control Nausea”.

### Treatment Protocol

DATE	CYCLE		TREATMENT	Carboplatin Option
	1	D 1	cisplatin + etoposide	carboplatin + etoposide
		D 2	cisplatin + etoposide	etoposide
		D 3	cisplatin + etoposide	etoposide
	2	D 1	cisplatin + etoposide	carboplatin + etoposide
		D 2	cisplatin + etoposide	etoposide
		D 3	cisplatin + etoposide	etoposide
	3	D 1	cisplatin + etoposide	carboplatin + etoposide
		D 2	cisplatin + etoposide	etoposide
		D 3	cisplatin + etoposide	etoposide
	4	D 1	cisplatin + etoposide	carboplatin + etoposide
		D 2	cisplatin + etoposide	etoposide
		D 3	cisplatin + etoposide	etoposide

## CHEMOTHERAPY SIDE EFFECTS AND MANAGEMENT

### Are there any risks?

- Unexpected and unlikely side effects can occur with any drug treatment. The ones listed in the following tables 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.

SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS	HOW COMMON IS IT?	MANAGEMENT
When your white blood cells are low, you are at greater <b>risk of having an infection</b> . White blood cells protect your body by fighting bacteria (germs) that cause infection.	Common	To help prevent infection: <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>immediately</b> at the first sign of <b>infection</b> such as fever (over 38°C or 100°F by an oral thermometer), chills, cough, or burning when you pass urine.</li> </ul>
When your <b>platelets</b> are low, you are at greater <b>risk of bruising or bleeding more easily than usual</b> .	Common	To help prevent bleeding problems: <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> <li>• Some medications such as ASA (e.g. Aspirin®) or ibuprofen (e.g. ADVIL®) may increase your risk of bleeding.</li> <li>• Many natural health products may increase your risk of bleeding.</li> <li>• Do not stop taking any medication prescribed by your doctor.</li> <li>• For minor pain, try acetaminophen (TYLENOL®) first, but occasional use of ibuprofen is acceptable.</li> </ul>
Cisplatin, carboplatin, or etoposide <b>burns</b> if it leaks under the skin.	Very rare	Tell your nurse or doctor <b>immediately</b> if you feel burning, stinging or any other change while the drug is being given.
<b>Chest pain or signs of a stroke</b> may rarely occur	Rare	Go to your nearest emergency department if you should experience any chest pain or signs of a stroke.

OTHER SIDE EFFECTS	HOW COMMON IS IT?	MANAGEMENT
<p><b>Nausea and vomiting</b> may occur after your treatment and may last for up to 24 hours. Nausea may last longer for some patients (ie. Delayed nausea and vomiting)</p>	<p>Very common</p>	<p>You will 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"> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids</li> <li>• Eat and drink often in small amounts</li> <li>• Try the ideas in <a href="#">Food Choices to Help Control Nausea</a></li> </ul> <p>Your doctor may manage delayed nausea and vomiting differently. Be sure to let your doctor know if you experience this.</p>
<p><b>Diarrhea</b> may occur after your treatment. Diarrhea can lead to dehydration.</p>	<p>Uncommon</p>	<p>To help manage diarrhea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids</li> <li>• Eat and drink often in small amounts</li> <li>• Avoid high fibre foods as outlined in <a href="#">Food Ideas to Help with Diarrhea</a></li> </ul>
<p><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. Mouth sores or bleeding gums can lead to an infection.</p>	<p>Uncommon</p>	<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 ½ teaspoonful baking soda or 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>• Try the ideas in <a href="#">Food Ideas to Help with Sore Mouth</a></li> </ul>

OTHER SIDE EFFECTS	HOW COMMON IS IT?	MANAGEMENT
<p><b>Hair loss</b> can occur 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.</p>	Common	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a gentle shampoo and soft brush</li> <li>• Care should be taken with use of hair spray, bleaches, dyes and perms.</li> <li>• Protect your scalp with a hat, scarf or wig in cold weather. Some extended health plans will pay part of the cost of a wig.</li> <li>• Cover your head or apply sunblock on sunny days.</li> <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-rimmed hat and glasses.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Changes in hearing may occur.</b></p>	common	<p>Contact your doctor if you notice ringing in your ears or any changes in your hearing.</p>

#### What other drugs can interact with cisplatin, carboplatin, and etoposide?

- Etoposide may increase the blood-thinning effect of warfarin. Inform your Family Doctor to check your INR during treatment and for 1 to 2 months after your treatment is finished. Adjust your warfarin dose as directed by your Doctor.
- Atovaquone and grapefruit juice may increase the effect of etoposide. Avoid grapefruit juice for 48 hours before and on day of dose.
- Some natural health products, such as glucosamine and St. John's Wort, may cause resistance to or reduce the effectiveness of etoposide.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start taking any new prescriptions or non-prescription products.

#### Other important things to know:

- Cisplatin and carboplatin can cause changes in kidney function. It is important to be well-hydrated before and after your treatment. This will prevent kidney problems.

### THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS VERY IMPORTANT

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

- Signs of an **infection** such as fever (over 38°C or 100°F by oral thermometer), shaking chills, severe sore throat, productive cough (coughing up thick or green sputum), pain or burning when you pass urine.
- Signs of an **allergic reaction** (rare) soon after a treatment including dizziness, fast heartbeat, face swelling or breathing problems.

- 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.
- Signs of **bleeding problems** such as black, tarry stools, blood in urine, pinpoint red spots on skin, extensive bruising.
- 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.
- Redness, swelling, pain or sores where the needle was placed

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

- Signs of kidney problems such as lower back pain or side pain, swelling of feet or lower legs, numbness or tingling in feet or hands, blood in urine, or cloudy urine.
- Signs of liver problems such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-coloured stools.
- Uncontrolled nausea, vomiting or diarrhea

**CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CONTINUE OR BOTHER YOU:**

- Easy bruising or bleeding
- Redness, swelling, pain or sores on your lips, tongue, mouth or throat
- Signs of anemia such as unusual tiredness or weakness
- Skin rash or itching
- Numbness or tingling in feet or hands or painful leg cramps

**If you experience symptoms or changes in your body that have not been described above but worry you, or in any symptoms are severe, contact:**

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