

## PHARMACY

Drug Information

### Cisplatin-Radiotherapy (RT)



#### What is Cisplatin-RT Regimen?

- Cisplatin is commonly given in combination with radiotherapy for the treatment of head and neck cancer.

#### How is Cisplatin-RT Administered / Taken?

- You will receive radiotherapy every Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays), and Cisplatin will be given into your veins (intravenous infusion) every week.

#### Can Cisplatin-RT be Administered / Taken With Other Medications?

- Please inform your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking other medications, including Traditional Chinese Medicines, Jamu medicines or supplements.

#### What are the Important Side Effects of Cisplatin-RT?

*Inform the nurses immediately during infusion of Cisplatin if you experience the following:*

- Allergic reaction  
Cisplatin may rarely cause an allergic reaction while it's being given. Signs of a reaction can include a rash, flushing or shortness of breath, swelling of your face or lips, feeling dizzy, having abdominal, back or chest pain or feeling unwell.
- Pain along the vein  
Cisplatin may cause pain at the site where the injection is given or along the vein. If you feel pain, tell your nurse straight away so that the infusion site can be checked. They may give the drug more slowly or flush it through with more fluids to reduce pain.

- Medications prescribed by your doctor should be beneficial for your condition even though they may result in some inevitable side effects.

Side Effect	Management
Risk of infection may be increased as Cisplatin can reduce the number of white blood cells in your blood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To reduce risk of infection:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wash your hands after toileting.</li> <li>- Avoid crowds and people who are sick.</li> <li>- Avoid raw food.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Please proceed to the A&amp;E department immediately if you experience signs of infection such as fever with a temperature of 38°C and above, chills and shivering. Avoid taking Paracetamol (Panadol®) to relieve fever. Be aware that taking Paracetamol may mask fever and hence delay treatment of infection.</li> </ul>
Bruising or bleeding may occur as Cisplatin can reduce the number of platelets in your blood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To reduce risk of bleeding problems:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do not pick your nose.</li> <li>- Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush.</li> <li>- Be aware that bleeding may take a longer time to stop.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Please proceed to the A&amp;E department immediately if you experience any severe bleeding (eg, passing a large amount of fresh blood in urine or stools, or passing black sticky stools) or significant bruising.</li> </ul>
Nausea or vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take small, frequent meals.</li> <li>• Avoid smells that precipitate nausea.</li> <li>• Take medicines for nausea or vomiting prescribed by your doctor.</li> <li>• Avoid tight-fitting clothes around the waist.</li> </ul>

Side Effect	Management
Mouth ulcers can occur on the tongue, the sides of the mouth or in the throat and this can lead to an infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brush your teeth gently after eating and at bedtime with a soft toothbrush.</li> <li>• Rinse and brush your dentures after eating and soak them in denture solution overnight.</li> <li>• Rinsing your mouth regularly with an alcohol-free mouth gargle or salt water may help reduce chances of infection.</li> </ul>
Taste changes including bitter or metallic taste in your mouth or find that food taste different	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This should go away once your treatment ends. Adding herbs and spices or strong-flavoured sauces can give your food more flavour. Sucking hard, sugar-free mint or ice may help to get rid of the metallic or bitter taste.</li> </ul>
Difficulty in hearing, ringing or stuffed sensation in the ears	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform your doctor immediately if you experience hearing difficulty or hearing loss.</li> </ul>
Numbness and tingling sensation in the hands or feet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform your doctor if you have this symptom or trouble buttoning up shirts or if you are unable to pick up objects</li> </ul>
Risk of blood disorders/leukemia and secondary cancers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occurs very rarely. Please discuss with your physician if you have concerns.</li> </ul>
Kidney problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cisplatin may affect the way your kidneys work and frequent blood test will be required to monitor your kidney function.</li> <li>• You may be given fluids into the vein before chemotherapy to protect your kidneys and ensure that you drink at least two to three litres (8 to 12 cups) of fluids when you get home.</li> </ul>

Side Effect	Management
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please check with your doctor regarding fluid intake if you have heart problems.</li> <li>• Please proceed to the A&amp;E department immediately if you experience any lower back pain or side pain, swelling of feet or lower legs.</li> </ul>

If you develop rashes, facial swelling or shortness of breath after taking the medication, you could be allergic to the medication. Please seek medical attention immediately.

### Are There any Special Precautions That I Need to Take?

- It is important to inform your doctor if you intend to conceive or breastfeed while taking this medication.
- You must not become pregnant during treatment with Cisplatin and radiotherapy and must use an effective method of contraception. You should take appropriate contraceptive measures during and up to 14 months after cessation of treatment. If pregnancy occurs during your treatment, you must inform your doctor immediately.
- Cisplatin and radiotherapy may have an anti-fertility effect, which could be irreversible. You should discuss with your doctor regarding fertility preservation prior to starting treatment.
- You should not breast-feed during treatment

### What Else can I do to Help My Condition?

- Exercise  
Light exercise is recommended as it helps to improve mobility, balance and even emotional well-being. Avoid strenuous exercise and rest when you feel tired.
- Stay positive  
Understand your condition and take an active role in managing it. Do not be afraid to talk about it with your doctor/ pharmacist/ family members. Repressed feelings can be harmful to your immediate well-being and long-term health.

- Adequate hydration  
Maintain adequate hydration with two to three litres (8 to 12 cups) of fluids per day unless informed by your doctor to restrict fluids. This will decrease your chances of getting constipation and also prevent dehydration.
- Medical and dental treatment  
If you need to go into hospital for any reason other than cancer, always inform the doctors and nurses that you are having chemotherapy.  
  
Talk to your cancer doctor if you think you need dental treatment. Always inform your dentist that you are having chemotherapy.

If you have any problem with your treatment, please contact your doctor, pharmacist or nurse clinician.

You can also find useful information with regards to your medication on this website: <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support>

