

## **Patient information leaflet for ABVD**

It is a chemotherapy regimen (protocol) which is used for the treatment of Hodgkins lymphoma. The regimen is named after the drug initials such as adriamycin (doxorubicin), bleomycin, vinblastine and dacarbazine. The above regimen must be taken under the supervision of a doctor who is experienced in giving chemotherapy medications for cancer.

### **Before Using It**

Inform of any medical illness such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disorder, liver disorder, congestive heart failure, tingling in hands and feet, heart disease, low blood counts and platelets, pregnancy, breast feeding and **drug allergy**. The above information will be useful to adjust the dose of your medicine.

*Please inform any cardiac or lung disorder before starting ABVD*

*Please use some kind of birth control while you are on chemotherapy.*

*Please avoid using any ayurvedic or homeopathic preparation while on chemotherapy.*

### **While Taking it.**

Chemotherapy drugs may interact with a number of drugs and supplements, which may either raise or lower these drugs in your blood. Tell your doctor if you are taking any of the following:

- **Multivitamin preparation ( Folic Acid)**
- Anti seizure drug (phenytoin, phenobarbitone)
- Digoxin and amlodipine
- Warfarin
- Grape fruit or grape fruit juice

### **How is it administered?**

ABVD treatment can usually be given to you as a day care patient. Before you start treatment you'll need to have a blood test, either on the same day or a few days beforehand. All drugs are administered through a vein (via cannula, central line, PICC, port) on the first day. Vinblastine and bleomycin are given by intravenous push whereas doxorubicin and dacarbazine are given as intravenous infusion over ½ to 1 hours. The treatment takes on an average 3 -4 hours. You will receive drugs every 15 days. For each cycle, you will have two treatments given 2 weeks apart (Day1 and Day 15). So this four week period completes one cycle of chemotherapy. Usually 4–6 cycles are given over a period of 4 – 6 months.

### **Possible side effects**

You will probably not have most of the following side effects, but if you have any, talk to your doctor or nurse. They can help you understand the side effects and cope with them. Each person's reaction to

chemotherapy is different. Some people have very few side effects while others may experience more. Below are listed the common side effects due to the drugs administered under this regimen.

#### COMMON SIDE EFFECTS: (> 10%)

- **Low WBC & RBC count and risk of infection** (The lowest WBC count will occur around 10 – 14 days after chemotherapy). If your age is more than 60 years and you are sick with advance cancer then chances of suffering from infection during low wbc count is high. Please refer to the patient leaflet for febrile neutropenia in case if fever is there.
- **Low platelet count** leading to bruises, bluish patches over body and any ear, nose or gum bleed. Please contact your health care professional as you may need platelet transfusion for these complaints.
- **Nausea and vomiting.** You will be given a prescription for drug(s) to take after your chemotherapy treatment and/or at home, as it is easier to prevent nausea than to treat it. Tablet ondansetron 8 mg twice per day with or without Tablet domperidone 10 mg thrice per day can be taken in case you suffer from intense nausea or vomiting.
- **Constipation.** Vinblastine and some anti-sickness drugs can cause constipation and tummy (abdominal) pain. Drinking plenty of fluids, eating more fibre and doing some exercise may also help. If you still have constipation you can start syrup cremaffin 4- 6 table spoon at night or a maximum of three times per day to relieve it. Do not strain during defecation while on chemotherapy.
- **Hair loss.** This usually starts 3–4 weeks after starting treatment, although it may occur earlier. Hair usually falls out completely. You may also have thinning and loss of eyelashes, eyebrows and other body hair. This is temporary and your hair will start to grow again once the treatment has finished.
- **Soreness of mouth and ulcers in mouth**
- **Loss of taste and appetite**

#### LESS COMMON SIDE EFFECTS: (1-10%)

- **Neuropathy:** Vinblastine may cause tingling and numbness of hands and feet's or in some cases weakness of hands and feet's. Inform your health care professionals if you develop any of these symptoms before receiving your next dose of vinblastine.
- **Allergic reactions:** especially to dacarbazine infusion. Some patients develop fever with chills or flu like symptoms within 48 hours after bleomycin injection which is due to an allergic reaction (10- 25%). Tablet paracetamol 500-750 mg may help in case of uncomfortable symptoms.
- **Skin changes and nail changes:** Bleomycin can cause a skin rash, which is in the form of dark itchy streaks (20 -30%). These rashes are temporary and your skin will go back to normal a few months after the treatment finishes. Although rare some patients develop facial flushing and skin rash due to dacrbazine. This rash may flare in sunlight. For those patients with above side effects avoid bright sunlight and or use sunscreen during the day.
- **Cardiac toxicity:** Doxorubicin (adriamycin) can cause weakness of heart ( Cardiomyopathy) which is rare ( 1 – 2 %).This is usually a late side effects which can be seen few months or years after receiving doxorubicin.
- **Lung Toxicity:** Bleomycin may damage your lungs ( 1-10%). The symptoms of this damage are dry intractable cough, breathlessness on exertion or at rest, feeling uncomfortable and wheezing with or

without fever. Inform your health care professional if you observe any of these symptoms before receiving next dose of bleomycin.

- Doxorubicin may cause reddish pink discoloration of your urine for 24 – 48 hours after injection which is absolutely harmless.
- Impaired fertility
- Irregular periods and temporary or permanent cessation of menstrual periods.
- Redness or soreness at the injection site due to leakage of the chemotherapy drug out of the vein.

### **Brands available in hospital**

DRUG:

Doxorubicin

Bleomycin

Vinblastine

Dactinomycin