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UNDERSTANDING YOUR PACLITAXEL THERAPY



TEVA PHARMACEUTICALS (PTY) LTD Co. Reg. No. 1986/002796/07.

1st Floor, Building 2, Maxwell Office Park, Magwa Crescent West, Waterfall City, Midrand, Gauteng 2090, South Africa.
PO Box 1590, Ruimsig, 1732, South Africa.
Tel: +27 11 055 0200. Fax: +27 11 055 0222.
Full prescribing information available on request.

Cipla Medpro (Pty) Ltd. Reg. No. 1995/004182/07. Building 9, Parc du Cap, Mispel Street, Bellville, 7530, RSA

Customer Care: 080 222 6662

Website: www.cipla.co.za





This booklet has been designed to give you more information about cancer and the treatment that you will be receiving.

If you have any concerns about your treatment, do not hesitate to ask your doctor or nurse for help and advice.

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NOTES:

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PATIENT: _____

DOCTOR: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

EMERGENCY NUMBER: _____

NURSE: _____

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CANCER

Cancer is a disease in which healthy cells of the body become abnormal.¹ Unlike healthy cells, cancerous cells:²

- Divide uncontrollably
- Can get into and destroy normal body tissue
- Can spread throughout your body

A group of abnormal cells form. If this group of cells gets bigger, it becomes a large clump of abnormal cells called a tumour. Tumours may be benign (usually not life-threatening) or malignant (cancerous).¹

CAUSES OF CANCER²

The body has mechanisms that may protect us from developing cancer. Damaged cells can repair themselves or your body's immune system may be able to destroy some types of abnormal cells before they multiply into a tumour. We all have a risk of developing cancer.¹

1. Age
2. Lifestyle-Smoking/ Drinking/ Diet
3. Family history
4. Other health conditions
5. Environmental factors - Chemicals/ Secondhand smoking

CANCER TREATMENT

Treatment options vary, depending on the type of cancer and how far it has grown or spread. These include chemotherapy, surgery and radiation, amongst others. This booklet focuses on the use of chemotherapy.¹

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MONTH: _____

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5
MONDAY					
TUESDAY					
WEDNESDAY					
THURSDAY					
FRIDAY					
SATURDAY					
SUNDAY					

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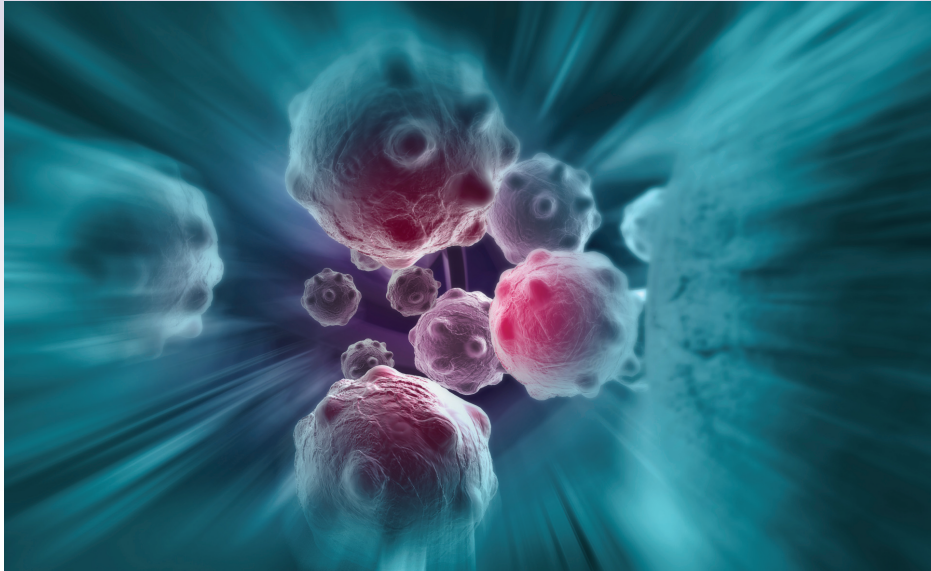
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Most cancers are probably due to a combination of factors.¹



CHEMOTHERAPY³

Chemotherapy is the treatment of cancer by using cytotoxic medicines. There are many different cytotoxic (destructive to cells) medicines used in the treatment of cancer. Different cytotoxic medicines destroy cells in different ways. For example, some work by affecting the genetic material of the cell directly, others work by blocking cells from using nutrients needed to divide and multiply. In each case the medication chosen, will depend on the type and stage of the cancer. Two or more cytotoxic medicines are often used in a course of chemotherapy, each with a different way of working, to give a better chance of success than using only one. In this booklet we focus on chemotherapy using cytotoxic medication to kill cancer cells, or to stop them from multiplying.

Chemotherapy medicines usually need to get into the bloodstream so that they can reach any cancerous cell, in all areas of the body. Many chemotherapies, including **PACLITAXEL**, are given by injection directly into a vein.^{3,4}

otherapy sessions, as well as any tests requested by your doctor

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HOW DOES PACLITAXEL WORK?⁴

PACLITAXEL works inside the cancer cell, damaging the supporting structure inside the cell that enables it to function properly, grow and divide. The cell is unable to reproduce and divide, and eventually dies.

HOW IS PACLITAXEL GIVEN?⁴

The dosage schedule will depend on the type and stage of cancer that has been diagnosed.

About an hour before receiving **PACLITAXEL** treatment, you will receive some oral (by mouth) and intravenous (into the vein) medication to prevent an allergic reaction.

Treatment cycles may need to be delayed if your blood count levels have not recovered enough.



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THE RISKS AND SIDE-EFFECTS OF CHEMOTHERAPY

Cytotoxic medicines are powerful and often cause unwanted side-effects. Cytotoxic medicines work by killing cells which are dividing and so some normal cells are damaged too.³

Precaution:

- Regular blood cell counts will be performed during treatment with **PACLITAXEL** in order to detect bone marrow suppression and a low white blood cell count early⁴

Frequently occurring side effects with **PACLITAXEL** include: ⁴

- Bone marrow suppression which may lead to a reduced number of red blood cells and white blood cells. This could result in an increased risk of infection⁴
- Lack of sensation or pins and needles in fingers or toes.⁴ A few months after the use of **PACLITAXEL** has been discontinued, sensory symptoms will improve or disappear
- Infections and injection site reactions⁴
- Hair loss⁴

Always tell your health care providers about any other medication including Vitamins and supplements that you are taking, as some medication can interfere with your chemotherapy.⁴

Women should avoid becoming pregnant during treatment, and should immediately inform their doctor should this occur. Breastfeeding should be discontinued for the duration of **PACLITAXEL** treatment.⁴

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU EXPERIENCE SIDE EFFECTS OF CHEMOTHERAPY

You should discuss with your doctor the particular risks and concerns for the medicines which are used in your own treatment. Here are some specific side effects that you may or may not experience while on chemotherapy.

Tiredness (fatigue)

Tiredness is a common side-effect. It is likely that you will feel more tired than normal during a course of chemotherapy. You may need to cut back on your normal activities, plan regular rests, and if possible, take some regular light exercise. Some people feel overwhelmingly tired and may need to rely on other people to do routine daily chores.³

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Nausea and vomiting

It can be common to feel sick (nauseous) during and after each cycle of treatment. Try to drink plenty of fluids even if you do not feel like it, to prevent dehydration. Sucking ice cubes is one tip to increase your fluid intake.³



Effects on the blood and immune system

Cytotoxic medicines can affect the bone marrow. The bone marrow is where you make red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets. Low levels of red blood cells may leave you feeling tired and looking pale, whilst low white blood cells will increase your risk of developing a serious infection. Low platelets may affect the ability of your blood to clot. You may bruise easily or bleed longer after a simple cut.³

Prior to each cycle of treatment, it is usual to have a blood test to check on your 'blood count'. This checks the level of your red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets. If any of these are too low, then a treatment cycle may be delayed, the choice of medicines may be altered or you may be given treatment to boost the levels of these blood constituents.³

Oral Care

The cells which line the mouth are affected by some cytotoxic medicines. This may lead to a sore mouth, a dry mouth or other mouth problems. Routine good mouth care will help to prevent mouth problems from developing or from becoming more serious.³

The calendars provided will help you to keep track of your chem

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Hair loss

Some cytotoxic medicines damage the hair making cells. Some or all of your hair may fall out. This usually occurs 2-3 weeks after a course of treatment starts. Body hair and eyelashes may also fall out in addition to scalp hair. After the course of treatment has finished the hair will usually regrow within 4-12 months. You may wish to cut your hair short before starting chemotherapy so that any changes are not so dramatic. Some people like to wear a wig. Other people prefer to wear a hat or scarf. In particular, remember to cover your head or wear high protection sun screen when out in the sun.

If your eyelashes fall out, you can wear glasses or sunglasses to protect your eyes on windy days.³

Constipation

This may be helped by eating plenty of foods high in fibre and having lots to drink. A laxative may be needed in some cases.³

Diarrhoea

Diarrhoea is a side-effect of some medicines. You should increase the amount of liquid that you drink if you develop diarrhoea. If it persists or becomes severe, you should tell your doctor.³

Nerve problems

Some medicines can affect nerves. This may lead to a lack of sensation in parts of the body such as the fingers or toes, pins and needles or weakness of muscles. Tell your doctor if any of these symptoms occur.³

Fertility

Some chemotherapy medicines can affect fertility in both men and women. Sometimes this is temporary and sometimes it is permanent. If this is a concern, one option may be for men to store sperm or women to store ova (eggs) before chemotherapy treatment begins. These can be 'frozen' and may be able to be used in the future if you wish to have a pregnancy. Some women develop an early menopause when taking some cytotoxic medicines.³

HOW TO LOOK AFTER YOURSELF WHILE ON CHEMOTHERAPY²

- **Find out all you can about your cancer.**

Write down all the questions you have about your cancer so that you can ask them at your next appointment. Ask your health care team for reliable resources for further information about your diagnosis. The more you know about your cancer and your treatment options, the more confident you're likely to feel.

- **Find someone to talk to.**

Find a trusted person you can talk with about how you're feeling. Perhaps that person is a close friend or family member who is a good listener. Other people who can help include clergy members and counselors. Other people with cancer can offer unique insight.

- **Stay connected to family and friends.**

Your family and friends provide an important support network for you during cancer treatment. Often family and friends want to help, but they aren't sure how. Think of ways you might like assistance, even if it's just being there to listen when you have a bad day. Offer these as suggestions when family and friends ask if there's anything they can do to help.

- **Take care of yourself.**

Do what you can to take care of yourself during cancer treatment. Eat a healthy diet full of fruits and vegetables. Get enough sleep so that you wake feeling rested. Find time for activities that can reduce stress, such as relaxation exercises, listening to music and writing your thoughts in a journal.

References:

1. Cancer - A General Overview. Available at: <http://www.patient.co.uk/showdoc/27000581>. Accessed 25 September 2015.
2. Cancer. Available at: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/cancer/D51076>. Accessed 25 September 2015.
3. Chemotherapy with Cytotoxic medicines. Available at: <http://www.patient.co.uk/health/Chemotherapy.htm>. Accessed 25 September 2015.

4. CIPLA PACLITAXEL and PCH PACLITAXEL approved package insert

Refer to the Package Insert for full prescribing information.

[S4] PCH PACLITAXEL 30. Each vial contains 30 mg Paclitaxel per 5 ml. Contains ethanol 49,7 % v/v. Reg. No.: A40/26/0609. Pharmacological classification: A 26 Cytostatic agents.

[S4] PCH PACLITAXEL 100. Each vial contains 100 mg Paclitaxel per 16,7 ml. Contains ethanol 49,7 % v/v. Reg. No.: A40/26/0610. Pharmacological classification: A 26 Cytostatic agents.

[S4] PCH PACLITAXEL 300. Each vial contains 300 mg Paclitaxel per 50 ml. Contains ethanol 49,7 % v/v. Reg. No.: A40/26/0611. Pharmacological classification: A 26 Cytostatic agents.

[S4] CIPLA-PACLITAXEL 30 mg/5 ml. Each vial contains 30 mg Paclitaxel per 5 ml. Contains ethanol 49,7 % v/v. Reg. No.: A41/26/0423. Pharmacological classification: A 26 Cytostatic agents.

[S4] CIPLA-PACLITAXEL 100 mg/16.7 ml. Each vial contains 100 mg Paclitaxel per 16,7 ml. Contains ethanol 49,7 % v/v. Reg. No.: A41/26/0424. Pharmacological classification: A 26 Cytostatic agents.

[S4] CIPLA-PACLITAXEL 300 mg/50 ml. Each vial contains 300 mg Paclitaxel per 50 ml. Contains ethanol 49,7 % v/v. Reg. No.: A41/26/0425. Pharmacological classification: A 26 Cytostatic agents.



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