

## Oncology and Radiotherapy

# Carboplatin chemotherapy for testicular seminoma

You have been offered a form of chemotherapy known as Carboplatin. This is a form of drug treatment designed to reduce the risk of your cancer recurring. Treatment is given to try to kill off any microscopic cancer cells should they remain in the body.

This information sheet aims to inform you about what to expect from the chemotherapy you will receive.

## When is it given?

You will be given an out-patient appointment to attend the Chemotherapy Clinic within the Arden Cancer Centre.

## How is it given?

Carboplatin is a colourless fluid that is given as a drip into a cannula, (a small tube inserted into a vein in the arm or the back of the hand). It is given over 30-60 minutes at this out-patient appointment. You will be given a single dose of chemotherapy. The dose of treatment will be calculated according to your kidney function and this will require a blood test using radioactive tracer material (EDTA).

## Treatment plan

The chemotherapy is given once only. Your Carboplatin infusion is prepared just for you. If you are unwell or cannot attend, please ring the chemotherapy unit and inform them to prevent wastage.

It is important to try and live as normal a life as possible while on treatment and that includes a normal healthy diet, a moderate intake of alcohol if desired, exercise as you feel fit, and normal personal and family relationships.

## Possible side effects

Most people tolerate this chemotherapy very well although there are several specific



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side-effects which are outlined below:

**Nausea and vomiting:** Chemotherapy can sometimes cause nausea, but the problem can usually be prevented with powerful modern anti-sickness drugs. Therefore, before the chemotherapy is given, you will receive two anti-sickness drugs. When you are discharged from hospital you will receive a supply of anti-sickness drugs. Should you still have nausea or vomiting, you must let us know – there are other tablets available to try.

**Infection:** Following chemotherapy your resistance to infection may be lowered. This effect can begin seven days after treatment has been given and your resistance to infection usually reaches its lowest point 10-14 days after chemotherapy. Your blood cells will then increase steadily and return to normal levels.

Any infection which is picked up following chemotherapy is potentially serious and must be treated immediately.

If you have any of the following symptoms, please telephone the number on your red card

- A temperature above 37.5 °C (which when rechecked is still high), shivering or feeling hot and cold
- A sore throat or cough/cold
- Pain or difficulty when passing urine
- If you feel otherwise unwell or have any other injuries/wounds

**Bruising or bleeding:** Carboplatin can reduce the production of platelets (which help clot the blood); as a result a tendency towards bruising or bleeding may occur.

**Anaemia (low number of red blood cells):** After having treatment with Carboplatin you may become anaemic. This may make you feel tired and breathless. Additional treatment is unlikely to be required but please let your doctor or nurse know if you develop these symptoms.

**Tiredness:** You may feel more tired than usual. All activity may require an effort. It is important that you continue to be as active as possible. Regular exercise (at least a short walk every day) as well as rest will help you overcome these side-effects more quickly. Prolonged rest will prolong, or worsen, the side-effects.

**Dental treatment:** You should delay all non-urgent dental treatment until at least six weeks after your chemotherapy treatment. The reason for this is directly related to the possibility of infection or easy bleeding. If you require urgent dental work, you should tell your dentist to allow him/her to telephone the hospital for advice on your latest blood tests.

**Hair loss:** Significant hair loss is extremely rare with this form of chemotherapy. Any hair thinning is not permanent and your hair will return to normal at the end of treatment.

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**Altered taste:** You may find that following chemotherapy that your food tastes different. Some patients experience a metallic taste in their mouth or cannot taste food at all. Normal taste will usually come back within a few weeks of treatment.

**Contraception:** It is not advisable to father a child whilst having Carboplatin treatment, as the developing foetus may be harmed. It is necessary to use barrier contraception whilst having treatment with this drug and effective contraception for at least six months afterwards.

## Further information:

For further information please contact:

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