

Carboplatin (testicular cancer) - Patient Information

Carboplatin is a form of chemotherapy offered to patients with testicular cancer. Carboplatin is given to kill off any possible remaining microscopic cancer cells, thereby reducing the risk of your cancer recurring. This chemotherapy is given once only. The dose of treatment will be calculated according to your kidney function and this will require a kidney test performed either one day in advance or the same day as chemotherapy. This information sheet aims to inform you about what to expect from the chemotherapy you will receive.

How to prepare

We recommend a normal healthy diet on the day of chemotherapy. You should take the anti-sickness drugs as prescribed.

Where is it given?

You will be given an out-patient appointment to attend “Infusjonsenheten” located at “Radiumhospitalet”.

How is it given?

Carboplatin 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 minutes. Thereafter you can return home.

Possible side effects

Most people tolerate this chemotherapy very well, although there are several specific side-effects which are outlined below.

Nausea and vomiting

Carboplatin can cause nausea, but this can usually be prevented with powerful modern anti-sickness drugs. Therefore, you should take the anti-sickness drugs as prescribed. The doctor will also prescribe anti-sickness drugs you should take if you experience any nausea. Should you still have nausea or vomiting, you must let your “fastlege” or local hospital know, there are also other anti-sickness drugs available.

Tiredness

You may feel more tired than usual. The tiredness is most noticeable the first week after chemotherapy. It is important to find a balance between activity and rest. Allow yourself to rest more than usual. We recommend you exercise as you feel fit. Some patients experience reduced memory and ability to concentrate. For most patients this normalizes after a while.

Bone marrow

Chemotherapy can cause a lower blood cell production in the bone marrow. This effect can begin seven days after treatment has been given, usually reaches its lowest point 10-14 days after chemotherapy, before increasing steadily and return to normal levels.

Due to lower number of white blood cells, your resistance to infection may be lowered. Due to lower number of blood platelets, you are at risk of bleeding (nose bleed, skin bleed). Due to lower number of red blood cells, you are at risk for anaemia. Anaemia may make you feel tired and breathless. Additional treatment is unlikely to be required but please let your “fastlege” know if you develop these symptoms.

It is important to try and live as normal a life as possible, with normal personal and family relationships. If possible, avoid contact with persons with infection, for instance a cold.

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

If you have any of the following symptoms, immediately contact your local hospital:

- Feel unwell and / or infection symptoms (shivering, feeling hot and cold, a sore throat, cough/cold, pain or difficulty when passing urine)
- A temperature above 38.4 °C once, or a temperature above 37.9°C for more than one hour.
We recommend you measure rectal temperature with an electronic thermometer.
- Nose- or skin bleeding (bloodspots or rashes on the skin), unexplained bruising, or bleeding gums

Constipation

Constipation may occur. You can prevent constipation by drinking 2-3 liters per day, high-fiber diet and be physically active. You can buy mild laxatives at the pharmacy (“apotek”) without a prescription, for instance Duphalac / Laktulose / Movicol. If needed, you can add Laxoberal.

Neurologic symptoms

In rare cases, Carboplatin can cause tingling or numbness in the fingers or toes. This is mild and temporary, but sometimes lasts for some time or may become permanent. Please report these symptoms to your doctor on your next hospital visit

Contraception

We recommend that you use a condom during sexual intercourse for two days following chemotherapy. This will protect your partner from any chemotherapy drugs that may be present in semen.

It is not advisable to father a child whilst having Carboplatin treatment, as the developing fetus may be harmed. It is necessary to use effective contraception for at least six months afterward chemotherapy. This chemotherapy may affect your ability to have children. We therefore advice men, who in the future want to father a child, to deposit sperm in the sperm bank before chemotherapy.

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.

Altered taste

You may find that your food tastes differently following chemotherapy. 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.