

For all concerns about your chemotherapy please phone the

Chemotherapy Hotline

Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm

01483 571122 – Main Switchboard, and ask for the Chemotherapy Hotline

All other times and during Bank Holidays

01483 571122 – Main Switchboard, and ask for the on call Oncology registrar

Other useful numbers

Fountain Centre

01483 406618

Macmillan Cancer Support

0808 808 0000

www.macmillan.org.uk

Patient information leaflet

Management of diarrhoea for patients receiving irinotecan

PALS and Advocacy contact details

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

Telephone: 01483 402757

Email: rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net

Opening hours: 9.00am–4.00pm
Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

Past review date: August 2016

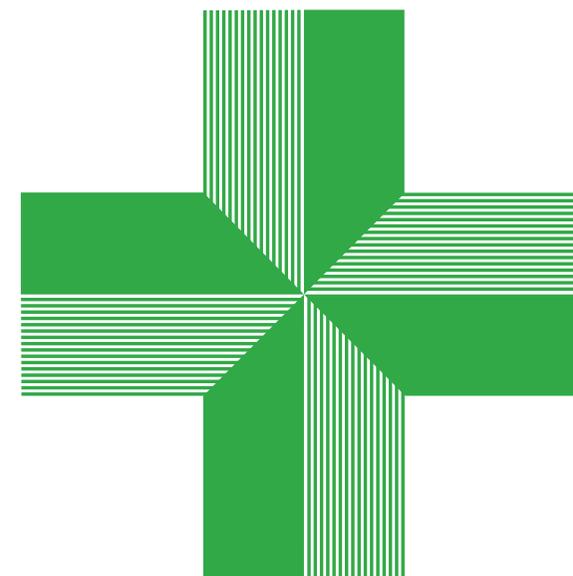
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Pharmacy Department



Irinotecan and diarrhoea, what do I need to know?

This leaflet contains some useful information about the chemotherapy drug irinotecan, and how to manage any diarrhoea you may develop. If you have any questions after reading this, please ask your nurse, pharmacist or doctor.

Before you leave the hospital you will be given anti-diarrhoea tablets (called loperamide) and antibiotics (called ciprofloxacin) to take home. These are only to be used if you develop diarrhoea – do not take them otherwise.

What do I do about early side effects?

You will receive an injection of atropine immediately before the irinotecan, which should minimise the possibility of you experiencing the following side effects: **diarrhoea, stomach cramps, sweating or watery eyes.**

However, if you are affected after you have got home from the hospital, but still **in the first 24 hours after the chemotherapy**, telephone the hospital and ask for advice. You may need another injection of atropine.

What if I get delayed diarrhoea?

Occasionally delayed diarrhoea (more than 24 hours after chemotherapy) can occur, usually within 1-2 weeks after irinotecan. If left untreated this could be dangerous, but it usually responds well to prompt treatment as explained below:

As soon as you have any diarrhoea, start taking the loperamide as below:

TWO loperamide capsules (4mg) immediately after the first liquid stool,

then

ONE capsule (2mg) every 2 hours. Overnight you may take 2 capsules (4mg) every 4 hours. **Continue until you have been free of diarrhoea for 12 hours.**

Drink plenty of fluids; 2-3 litres of water or other fluids (e.g. soup or soda) daily. It may also be appropriate to start taking rehydration sachets (e.g. Dioralyte®) according to the instructions on the packet.

If you are unable to drink or take the medicine (e.g. due to sickness), contact the hospital immediately.

If the diarrhoea has not settled after **24 hours**, contact the hospital. You will be asked to start taking the **ciprofloxacin**. However if the diarrhoea is severe, if you cannot drink enough, or if you have a temperature, you may also need to be admitted into hospital.

If the diarrhoea persists for a further **24 hours** you should contact the hospital again, as it is likely you will need to come into hospital.

Do not take the loperamide for more than 48 hours.

Ensure you get a new supply of loperamide and ciprofloxacin when you visit for your next cycle of chemotherapy.

Finally, if you become suddenly unwell between hospital visits, especially if you have a high temperature, shivering fits or severe diarrhoea, please contact us immediately.

Reference sources:

SPC for Irinotecan (Campto ®) at www.medicines.org.uk

St Luke's Cancer Alliance irinotecan - containing chemotherapy protocols