Azacitidine

- Azacitidine (ay za site' i deen) is a drug that is used to treat some types of cancer. It is a cloudy liquid that is injected under the skin.
- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or allergic reaction to azacitidine before receiving azacitidine.
- Blood tests may be taken regularly during treatment. The dose and timing of your chemotherapy may be changed based on the test results and/or other side effects.
- Azacitidine may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use birth control while being treated with azacitidine. Women considering having children should continue using birth control up to 3 months after treatment. Men should continue using birth control for 6 months after treatment. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breastfeed during treatment.
- Tell doctors or dentists, other healthcare providers that you are being treated with this medication before you receive any other treatment from them.

Changes in blood counts

This drug may cause temporary changes in your blood counts. Your doctor will be following these changes carefully by performing blood tests. .Adjustment of your treatment may be needed in certain circumstances

BLOOD COUNTS	MANAGEMENT
Normal white blood cells protect your body by fighting bacteria (germs) that cause infection. **When they are low, you are at greater risk of having an infection**	To help prevent infection: • Wash your hands often and always after using the bathroom. • Avoid crowds and people who are sick. • Visit the National Center of Cancer Care and Research (NCCCR) urgent care unit **immediately** at the first sign of an infection such as fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer), chills, cough, or burning when you pass urine.
Normal platelets help your blood to clot normally after an injury (e.g., cut). **When the platelet count is low you may be more likely to bruise or bleed**	To help prevent bleeding problems: • Try not to bruise, cut, or burn yourself. • Clean your nose by blowing gently. Do not pick your nose. • Avoid constipation. • Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush as your gums may bleed more easily. Maintain good oral hygiene. Some medications such as aspirin, ibuprofen or other pain medications may increase your risk of bleeding. • For minor pain, try paracetamol (Panadol ®) • Refer to your doctor if any of these medications has been prescribed to you.

Side effects that may occur and tips for management

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Allergic reactions may rarely occur. Signs of an allergic reaction may include flushing, rash, itching, dizziness, swelling or breathing problems.	Tell your nurse if this happens while you are receiving azacitidine or visit the Urgent Care Unit at the National Center for Cancer Care and Research (NCCCR) **immediately** if this happens after you leave the Day Care Unit
Redness, swelling, itching, pain, or tenderness may occur where the needle was placed.	Apply cool compresses or soak in cool water for 15-20 minutes several times a day
Nausea and **vomiting** may occur after your treatment.	You will be given a prescription for anti-nausea drug(s) to take before your chemotherapy treatment and/or at home. **It is easier to prevent nausea than treat it once it has occurred**, so follow directions closely. • Drink plenty of fluids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts.
Skin rashes may sometimes occur.	If itching is very irritating, call your doctor. Otherwise, be sure to mention it at your next visit.
Fever may sometimes occur.	• Take paracetamol (Panadol ®). If you have fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer) **plus** another sign of infection, visit the Urgent Care Unit at NCCCR **immediately.** Other signs of infection include chills, cough, or burning when you pass urine.
Minor bleeding, such as **nosebleeds**, may sometimes occur.	• Sit up straight and tip your head slightly forward. Tilting your head back may cause blood to run down your throat. • Pinch your nostrils shut between your thumb and forefinger or apply firm pressure against the bleeding nostril for 10 full minutes. • After 10 minutes, check to see if your nose is still bleeding. If it is, hold it for another 10 minutes. • Sit quietly for a few hours and do not blow your nose for at least 12 hours after the bleeding has stopped. • Get emergency help if a nosebleed lasts longer than 20 minutes.

Patient education leaflet
Adapted from BC Cancer Drug Manual - Canada (developed on September. 2010, Revised February. 2013)
Prepared by Clinical Pharmacy Department NCCCR- Version 1 (May 2017)

Diarrhea may sometimes occur.	• Drink plenty of fluids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Avoid high fibre foods
Constipation may sometimes occur.	• Exercise if you can. • Drink plenty of fluids.
Headache may sometimes occur.	• Take paracetamol (Panadol ®)
Muscle or **joint pain** may sometimes occur.	• Take paracetamol (Panadol ®) for mild to moderate pain. Tell your doctor if the pain interferes with your activity.
Sugar control may be affected in diabetics.	• Check your blood sugar regularly if you are diabetic.
You may sometimes have **trouble sleeping.**	• Talk to your doctor if you continue to have trouble sleeping. • This will return to normal when you stop receiving azacitidine.
Loss of appetite and **weight loss** may sometimes occur.	
Tiredness and lack of energy may sometimes occur.	Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired.
Hair loss is rare with azacitidine. If you lose hair, it will grow back once you stop treatment with azacitidine. Color and texture may change.	• Use a gentle shampoo and soft brush. • Apply mineral oil to your scalp to reduce itching.

SEE YOUR DOCTOR OR GET EMERGENCY HELP IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of **bleeding problems** such as black, tarry stools; blood in urine; pinpoint red spots on skin; extensive bruising.
- Signs of an **allergic reaction** (rare) soon after a treatment including dizziness, fast heartbeat, face swelling, or breathing problems.
- Signs of **heart or lung problems** such as a fast or uneven heartbeat, chest pain, chest pressure, shortness of breath or difficulty in breathing, swelling of feet or lower legs, or fainting.
- Signs of an **infection** such as fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer), shaking chills; severe sore throat, productive cough (coughing up thick or green sputum); cloudy or foul smelling urine; painful, tender, or swollen red skin wounds or sores; abdominal pain or tenderness.
- **Seizures** or loss of consciousness

SEE YOUR DOCTOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (DURING OFFICE HOURS) IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of **anemia** such as unusual tiredness or weakness.
- Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-colored stools.
- Signs of **kidney problems** such as lower back or side pain, swelling of feet or lower legs.

CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CONTINUE OR BOTHER YOU:

- Stomach pain or uncontrolled nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.
- Headache or other pain not controlled with paracetamol (Panadol ®).
- Bleeding gums, easy bruising, or minor bleeding.
- Redness, swelling, itching, pain, or sores where the needle was placed.
- Redness, swelling, pain, or sores on your lips, tongue, mouth, or throat.
- Skin rash or itching.
- Dizziness.
- Feelings of confusion or anxiety.
- For diabetics: uncontrolled blood sugar levels.

REPORT ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS TO YOUR DOCTOR

This is a summary of useful information to help you understand and take your medicine safely .

We are available to answer your questions For urgent inquiries contact :

- **Urgent care unit at the National Center of Cancer Care and Research (NCCCR) TEL : 44397179 (available 24 hours, all week days).**

For further information or question contact :

- **Your doctor** (from 7 am – 3 pm) .
- **Clinical Pharmacy section,** TEL: 44397239 (Sun-Thurs from 7 am – 3 pm) .
- **Outpatient Pharmacy**, TEL: 44397531, 44397825 (Sun-Thurs from 7 am – 3 pm) .

Pharmacy Department

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