Cetuximab

- **Cetuximab** is a drug that is used to treat many types of cancers. It is a monoclonal antibody, a type of protein designed to target and kill cancer cells. It is a clear liquid that is injected into a vein.
- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or **allergic reaction** to cetuximab or other antibody treatment before receiving cetuximab.
- A **blood test** may be taken before each treatment. The dose and timing of your chemotherapy may be changed based on the test results and/or other side effects.
- Some drugs, herbal products and supplements may **interact** with your treatment. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any of these, or before you start taking any new drugs.
- Cetuximab may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use **birth control** while being treated with cetuximab. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breast feed during treatment.
- **Tell** doctors, dentists, and other health care providers that you are being treated with cetuximab before you receive any treatment from them.

Side effects that may occur and tips for management

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Chills, fever, and swelling commonly occur during the first cetuximab infusion. You may also experience shivering, problems breathing, dizziness, headache, or hoarseness. Reactions are less common with later treatments.	Tell your nurse or doctor immediately if you have a reaction during your treatment. • Your cetuximab may be temporarily stopped and then given more slowly. • You may be given other drugs to treat the reaction.
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 antinausea 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 liquids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts.
Skin reactions such as acne, rash, dryness or itchiness commonly occur.	• Avoid direct sunlight and tanning salons during treatment and for 2 months following treatment. • Wear a hat, long sleeves, and long pants outside on sunny days. • Wear a sunscreen that a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30. Apply liberally, 30 minutes before exposure. Reapply every 2 hours and after swimming.
Diarrhea may sometimes occur.	If diarrhea is a problem: • Drink plenty of liquids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Avoid high fiber foods.
Constipation may sometimes occur.	• Exercise if you can. • Drink plenty of fluids.
Increased bone pain may sometimes occur.	• You may take paracetamol (Panadol ®) for mild to moderate pain. • Tell your doctor if the pain interferes with your activity.
Headache may sometimes occur.	Take paracetamol (Panadol ®).
Nail changes, especially of the big toes and thumbs, may occur.	• If nails are painful, you may take paracetamol (Panadol ®) for mild to moderate pain. • Tell your doctor if the pain interferes with your activity. Otherwise, be sure to mention it at your next visit.
Swelling of hands, feet, or lower legs may sometimes occur if your body retains extra fluid.	If swelling is a problem: • Elevate your feet when sitting. • Avoid tight clothing.
You may have **trouble sleeping**.	• Talk to your doctor if you continue to have trouble sleeping. • This will return to normal when you stop taking cetuximab.
Loss of appetite and **weight loss** are common.	
Tiredness and lack of energy may occur.	Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired.
Hair loss is rare with cetuximab. If you lose hair, it will grow back once you stop treatment with cetuximab. Color and texture may change.	• Use a gentle shampoo and soft brush. • Apply mineral oil to your scalp to reduce itching.

Patient education leaflet
Adapted from BC Cancer Drug Manual (Developed: 1 January 2008, Revised: 1 June 2009)
Prepared by Clinical Pharmacy Department at the National Center for Cancer Care and Research - Version 1 on May 2017

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

- Signs of an **allergic** reaction soon after a treatment including fever, dizziness, fast heartbeat, face swelling, chills or breathing problems.
- Signs of **heart or lung problems** such as fast or uneven heartbeat, chest pain, chest pressure, shortness of breath or difficulty in breathing, swelling of feet or lower legs, or fainting.
- **Seizures** or **loss** of **consciousness.**
- 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.

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

- Severe **skin reaction**, including the area around the nails that is painful, red, or swollen.
- Unusual **tiredness** or weakness.
- Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-coloured stools.
- Signs of **kidney problems** such as lower back or side pain, swelling of feet or lower legs.
- **Numbness** or **tingling** in feet or hands.
- **Changes** in **eyesight**, eye pain, sensitivity to light, or severe eye redness.

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

- Uncontrolled nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, constipation, loss of appetite or weight loss.
- Dry mouth or increased thirst.
- Headache or other pain not controlled with paracetamol (Panadol ®).
- Redness, swelling, pain, or sores on your lips, tongue, mouth, or throat.
- Skin rash or dry, itchy skin.
- Easy bruising or minor bleeding.
- Changes to eyelashes or eyebrow hair
- Confusion, anxiety or depression, or trouble sleeping.

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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