Dacarbazine

- **Dacarbazine** is a drug that is used to treat many types of cancers. 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 temozolomide (TEMODAL®) or dacarbazine before taking dacarbazine.
- 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.
- Dacarbazine may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use **birth control** while being treated with dacarbazine. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breast feed during treatment.
- **Tell** doctors, dentists or other health care providers that you are being treated with this medication before you receive any other treatment from them.

Side effects that may occur and tips for management

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Dacarbazine **burns** if it leaks under the skin.	Tell your nurse or doctor **immediately** if you feel burning, stinging, or any other change while the drug is being given.
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 and may last for 1-12 hours.	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.
A flu-like illness may rarely occur shortly after your treatment. You may have fever, chills, muscle aches, and joint aches. Flu-like symptoms usually disappear on their own.	• Take paracetamol (Panadol ®) • Fever and chills which occur more than 48 hours after treatment may be signs of an infection, Visit the National Center for Cancer Care and Research (NCCCR) Urgent Care Unit **immediately**.
Skin rashes may rarely occur.	If itching is very irritating, call your doctor. Otherwise, be sure to mention it at your next visit.
Your **skin may sunburn** more easily than usual. Sunburn is more common right after treatment with dacarbazine.	• Avoid direct sunlight and tanning salons. • Wear a hat, long sleeves, and long pants or skirt outside on sunny days. • Wear a sunscreen that blocks both UVA and UVB and has a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30. Reapply every 2 hours and after swimming.
Your **white blood cells** may decrease 10-14 days after your treatment. They usually return to normal 1-3 weeks after your last treatment. 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. • Take care of your skin and mouth. • Avoid crowds and people who are sick. • Visit the National Center for 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.
Your **platelets** may decrease 12-18 days after your treatment. They usually return to normal 1-3 weeks after your last treatment. Platelets help to make your blood clot when you hurt yourself. **You may bruise or bleed more easily than usual.**	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.
Loss of appetite is common after treatment with dacarbazine.	
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 dacarbazine. Your hair will grow back once you stop treatment with dacarbazine. 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 - CANADA (Developed September 1994, revised 1 September 2007, 1 January 2011)
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 **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.
- Signs of **bleeding problems** such as black, tarry stool; 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.
- **Seizures** or **loss of consciousness.**
- Repeated **vomiting** and cannot keep fluids and medications down after chemotherapy.

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

- Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-colored stool.
- Signs of **anemia** such as unusual tiredness or weakness.
- 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:

- Uncontrolled nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or weight loss.
- Easy bruising or minor bleeding.
- Redness, swelling, pain, or sores where the needle was placed.
- Redness, swelling, pain, or sores on your lips, tongue, mouth, or throat.
- Skin rash or itching.
- Numbness or tingling of the face.
- Dizziness.
- Changes in eyesight.

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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