Docetaxel

- **Docetaxel** is a drug that is used to treat some types of cancer. 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 docetaxel, paclitaxel or cabazitaxel before receiving docetaxel.
- 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.
- You will be given a prescription for **dexamethasone**. Dexamethasone helps prevent nausea, fluid retention and allergic reactions.It is important to take the dexamethasone exactly as directed or you may not be able to have your treatment. On treatment days, it is especially important to take the morning dose before your treatment.
- 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.
- Docetaxel may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use **birth control** while being treated with docetaxel. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breastfeed 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
Allergic reactions may sometimes occur. Signs of an allergic reaction may include rash, itching, dizziness, swelling or breathing problems, joint or muscle pain.	• Tell your nurse if this happens while you are receiving docetaxel or visit the National Center for Cancer Care and Research (NCCCR) Urgent Care Unit **immediately** if this happens after you leave the day care unit.
Docetaxel **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
Fluid retention may occur. Signs of extra fluid build-up are swelling of feet, hands or belly, breathing problems, cough, or rapid weight gain.	• Take your **dexamethasone** tablets as directed by doctor, pharmacist, or nurse. • Tell your doctor at your next visit. • Elevate your feet when sitting. • Avoid tight clothing.
Nausea and vomiting may occur after your treatment. Most people have little or no nausea.	You may 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.
Fever sometimes occurs shortly after treatment with docetaxel. Fevers should last no longer than 24 hours.	• Take paracetamol (Panadol ®) • Fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer) which occurs more than a few days after treatment may be a sign of an infection .Visit the National Center for Cancer Care and Research (NCCCR) Urgent Care Unit **immediately.**
Diarrhea may sometimes occur.	• Drink plenty of fluids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Avoid high fiber foods
Your **white blood cells** may decrease 7 days after your treatment. They usually return to normal 15 to 21 days 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. • 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.
Sore mouth may sometimes occur a few days after treatment. Mouth sores can occur on the tongue, the sides of the mouth, or in the throat. **Mouth sores or bleeding gums can lead to an infection.**	• Brush your teeth gently after eating and at bedtime with a very soft toothbrush. If your gums bleed, use gauze instead of a brush. Use baking soda instead of toothpaste. • Make a mouthwash with ½ teaspoon baking soda or salt in 1 cup warm water and rinse several times a day.
Skin rashes may sometimes occur. Rashes generally resolve before the next treatment.	• If itching is very irritating, call your doctor. Otherwise, be sure to mention it at your next visit.
Nail changes such as change in color may occur. Rarely, nails will loosen or fall off, or the nail beds will be painful.	• Take paracetamol (Panadol ®) if nails are painful.
Muscle or joint pain may occur a few days after your treatment.	• You may take paracetamol (Panadol ®) for mild to moderate pain. • Tell your doctor if the pain interferes with your activity.
Tiredness and lack of energy may commonly occur.	• Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired.
Hair loss is common and may begin within a few days or weeks of treatment. Your hair may become thinner or you may lose it completely. Your scalp may feel tender. Hair loss may occur on your face and body. In most cases, your hair will grow back once your treatments are over and sometimes between treatments. Rarely, hair may not grow back for more than two years. Color and texture may change.	• Use a gentle shampoo and soft brush. • Apply mineral oil to your scalp to reduce itching. • If you lose your eyelashes and eyebrows, protect your eyes from dust and grit with a broad-rimmed hat and glasses. • Protect your scalp with a hat, scarf or wig in cold weather. • Cover your head or apply sunblock on sunny days.

Patient education leaflet
Adapted from BC Cancer Drug Manual - CANADA(Developed: May 2012; Revised: April 2013)
Prepared by Clinical Pharmacy Department at the National Center for Cancer Care and Research - Version 1 on May 2017

Numbness or tingling of the fingers or toes may sometimes occur. This will slowly return to normal once your treatments are over. This may take several months.	• Be careful when handling items that are sharp, hot, or cold. • Tell your doctor at your next visit, especially if you have trouble with buttons, writing, or picking up small objects.
Hand-foot skin reaction may rarely occur during docetaxel treatment. The palms of your hands and soles of your feet may tingle, become red, numb, painful, or swollen. Skin may also become dry or itchy. You may not be able to do your normal daily activities if blisters, severe pain, or ulcers occur.	• Avoid tight-fitting shoes or rubbing pressure to hands and feet, such as that caused by heavy activity. • Avoid tight-fitting jewellery. • Clean hands and feet with lukewarm water and gently pat to dry; avoid hot water. • Apply a sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of at least 30. • Apply lanolin-containing creams to hands and feet, liberally and often. • Tell your cancer doctor or your nurse at the next visit if you have any signs of hand-foot skin reaction as your dose may need to be changed

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

- Signs of an **allergic reaction** (rare) soon after a treatment including dizziness, fast heartbeat, face swelling, or breathing problems
- 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 **heart** such as fast or uneven heartbeat, chest pain, chest pressure, or fainting.
- Signs of **lung problems** such as shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, cough, and fever.
- Signs of a **stroke** such as sudden onset of severe headache, eyesight changes, slurred speech, loss of coordination, weakness or numbness in arm or leg.

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

- Signs of **abdominal discomfort** including new pain, bloating or cramping.
- Signs **of fluid retention** such as bothersome swelling of feet or lower legs.
- Severe **skin reaction** where you have had radiation.
- Signs of **anemia** such as unusual tiredness or weakness.
- Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-colored stool.
- Ringing in your ears or **hearing problems.**
- Increased **sore throat or mouth** that makes it difficult to swallow comfortably.

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

- Uncontrolled nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.
- Easy bruising or minor bleeding.
- Redness, swelling, pain, or sores where the needle was placed.
- Skin rash or itching.
- Taste alterations.
- Tearing of eyes

REPORT ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS TO YOUR DOCTOR

Instructions and schedule for taking (DEXAMETHASONE) tablets with the Chemotherapy (DOCETAXEL)

Time	Dose/ instructions	
Day BEFORE chemotherapy	4 tablets in the morning (after food) 4 tablets in the afternoon (after food)	**Total of 3 doses before chemo**
Chemotherapy day	4 tablets in the morning (after food) before chemo	
	CHEMOTHERAPY given in Day care	
	4 tablets in the afternoon (after food) after	
Day AFTER Chemotherapy	4 tablets in the morning (after food) 4 tablets in the afternoon (after food)	**Total of 3 doses after chemo**

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- Dexamethasone tablets are important for preventing some chemotherapy side effects such as swelling or collection of fluid in the body
- Dexamethasone tablets are also important for preventing nausea / vomiting
- Dexamethasone tablets should be taken after food
- It is advised not to delay the afternoon doses (for example take morning dose after breakfast and evening dose after lunch)
- In case you forgot to take your steroid before chemo :

* Please let your nurse know upon your arrival to day care and BEFORE receiving chemotherapy
* After chemotherapy, you will take the remaining 3 doses normally as scheduled above
* Saving the date on a calendar or using phone alarm for Dexamethasone tablets timing would help you remind taking your medicine

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

18-0245