Epirubicin

- **Epirubicin** is a drug that is used to treat many types of cancers. It is a red liquid that is injected into a vein.
- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or **allergic reaction** to epirubicin, doxorubicin, daunorubicin, idarubicin, mitomycin or mitoxantrone before treatment begins.
- 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.
- Epirubicin may cause **sterility** in men and **menopause** in women. If you plan to have children, discuss this with your doctor before being treated with Epirubicin.
- Epirubicin may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy.It is best to use **birth control** while being treated with Epirubicin. 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
Epirubicin **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.
Your **urine may be pink or reddish** for 1-2 days after your treatment.	• This is expected as epirubicin is red and is passed in your urine.
Nausea and vomiting may occur after your treatment and usually ends within 24 hours.	You may 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.
Diarrhea may occur.	• Drink plenty of liquids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Avoid high fiber foods
Your **white blood cells** may decrease 1-2 weeks after your treatment. They usually return to normal 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. • 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.
Your **platelets** may decrease 1-2 weeks after your treatment. They usually return to normal 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 have been prescribed to you.
Sore mouth may 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. • Try soft, bland foods like puddings, milkshakes and cream soups. • Avoid spicy, crunchy or acidic food, and very hot or cold foods
Tiredness and lack of energy may 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 get thinner or you may become totally bald. Your scalp may feel tender. You may lose hair on your face and body. Your hair will grow back once your treatments are over and sometimes between treatments. 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.
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.
Your **skin may darken** in some areas such as your nails, soles or palms.	• This will slowly return to normal once you stop treatment with epirubicin.

Patient education leaflet
Adapted from BC Cancer Drug Manual - CANADA(Developed: February 2006, Limited revision: 20 February 2007)
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** (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); chills; cough; pain or burning when you pass urine.
- Signs of **bleeding problems** such as black, tarry stool; blood in urine or stool; pinpoint red spots on skin, extensive bruising.
- Signs of a **blood clot** such as tenderness or hardness over a vein, calf swelling and tenderness, sudden onset of cough, chest pain or shortness of breath. .

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

- Severe **skin reaction** where you have had radiation.
- Signs of **anemia** such as unusual tiredness or weakness.
- **Skin rash** or **itching**.
- Signs of **heart or lung problems** such as fast or uneven heartbeat, chest pain, and chest pressure, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, swelling of ankles or fainting.

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.
- Redness, swelling, pain or sores on your lips, tongue, mouth or throat.

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

18-0248