

## Dexamethasone, Cytarabine, Cisplatin and Rituximab (DHAP-R)

Drug	How drug is given	Day drug is given
DEXAMETHASONE	Pills	Days 1-4
CYTARABINE	IV over 3 hours	Days 2-3
DEXAMETHASONE 0.1%	Eye Drops	Every 6 hours. Start 1 hour prior to Cytarabine and continue for 24 hours after the last dose of Cytarabine.
CISPLATIN	IV	Days 2 and 3
RITUXIMAB	IV or Subcutaneous Injection	Day 1 Given at the Juravinski Hospital in the Oncology Day Services Unit (ODS). The 1 <sup>st</sup> cycle will be given by an IV infusion over a long period of time. Following cycles will be given by subcutaneous injection.

One cycle = 21-28 days.  
Total of up to 6 cycles.

## Things to know:

- You will need a digital thermometer.
- You can buy one at most drug stores.



## Possible side effects:

- Nausea and vomiting (take anti-nausea medications as directed).
- Hair loss within 21 days.
- Ringing in your ears.
- Irritation or redness of your eyes - CALL your Health Care Team.
- Mouth sores.
- Low blood counts which leads to infection, fatigue and bleeding.
- Constipation.
- Numbness and tingling in your fingers and toes.
- Dexamethasone (steroid) side effects may include mood swings, irritability and difficulties with sleeping.

## Chemotherapy: What you need to know

There will be a decrease in your blood cells. These include white blood cells, red blood cells, hemoglobin and platelets.

- **CALL your Health Care Team if any side effects seem unexpected or extreme.**

## Contact information:

Health Care Team: **905-387-9495**

- Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_
- Nurse: \_\_\_\_\_

## If you have any of these signs of an infection call your health care team right away:



- A temperature of 38°C or 100°F or more. This is a fever.  
**DO NOT take Tylenol, Aspirin, ibuprofen or anti-inflammatory medications without checking with your team first.**  
They may cause bleeding and may hide a fever. Call if you need medication for pain.
- Increased shortness of breath or a new cough.
- A cough that produces coloured phlegm or sputum.
- Red inflamed skin.
- Diarrhea that does not go away.
- Pain or burning with urination.
- Sore throat.
- Signs of shingles: pain, blisters or a skin rash. It may look like chicken pox.

## What to watch for:

- Unusual bleeding - CALL your Health Care Team right away.
- Constipation (no bowel movement for 2 days). Use your laxatives as needed. Do not use a suppository or enema.
- Numbness or tingling in your hands and feet.
- Increased swelling of the feet, legs, arms or hands.
- Increased thirst, voiding (peeing) more often, or an increase in blood sugar.
- Voiding (peeing) less.

## **We encourage you to:**

- Watch the [chemotherapy video](#) and read the [chemotherapy book](#).
- Eat and drink well (at least 2 litres of non-caffeinated fluids a day).
- Practice good hygiene.
- Practice good mouth care.
- Take Dexamethasone early in the day with food. Do not drink alcohol while on Dexamethasone.



## **Possible severe or long-term side effects:**

- Potential of some hearing loss.
- Bone thinning/weakening.
- Potential future bone marrow damage.
- Potential infertility.

Link to chemotherapy video and book:

<https://www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/areas-of-care/cancer-care/cancer-services/chemotherapy/>

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