

## EPOCH-R

<b>Drug</b>	<b>How drug is given</b>	<b>Day drug is given</b>
<b>Etoposide</b> <b>Vincristine</b> <b>Doxorubicin</b>	IV IV IV	Mixed together and given via home pump started on Day 1. Disconnected on Day 5
<b>Cyclophosphamide</b>	IV	Day 5
<b>Prednisone</b>	pills	Twice daily Day 1 to 5
<b>Rituximab</b>	IV first cycle Subcutaneous injection Cycle 2+	First dose is given long day in Oncology Day Services (ODS) at Juravinski Hospital. Cycle 2+ are given at JCC Chemo Suite.

You will receive 6-8 cycles of EPOCH-R. Each cycle is 21 days.

Your chemotherapy cycle may be delayed because of side effects.

Doses of chemo may increase cycle 2+ depending on blood counts.

**Rituxumab** is a monoclonal antibody, a type of chemotherapy that targets cancer cells. Allergic reactions such as fever, chills and a rash can happen while receiving it through your intravenous (IV). The first IV treatment is given over 4-6 hours to reduce the chances of a reaction. If there is no reaction, it can be given as a subcutaneous injection in the JCC Chemo Suite.

### **Possible side effects:**

- Nausea and vomiting, take anti-nausea medications as directed.
- Hair loss within 21 days.
- Prednisone (steroid) side effects, such as mood swings, irritability and difficulties with sleeping.
- Low blood counts which leads to infection, fatigue and bleeding.
- Constipation.
- Numbness and tingling in fingers and toes.

### **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: \_\_\_\_\_

You will need a digital thermometer.

You can buy one at most drug stores.



## 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.
- A cough that produces coloured phlegm or sputum.
- Red, inflamed skin.
- Diarrhea that does not go away. **CALL** if more than 4 loose stools in one day.
- Increased shortness of breath.
- Pain or burning with urination.
- Sore throat.
- Signs of shingles: pain, blisters or 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 laxatives as needed. Do not use a suppository or enema.
- Numbness and tingling in your fingers and toes.
- Increased thirst, voiding (peeing) more often or an increase in blood sugar.
- Increased swelling of feet or hands.
- 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 Prednisone early in the day with food. Do not drink alcohol while on Prednisone.



## Possible severe or long term side effects:

- Heart damage.
- Bone thinning/weakening.
- Potential future bone marrow damage.
- Infertility.

Link to chemotherapy video and book:

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