



Provincial Health Services Authority

## For the Patient: GIAVDOC

Other Names: Palliative treatment of metastatic esophageal and stomach cancer using Docetaxel.

**GI** = GastroIntestinal

**AV** = Advanced

**DOC** = DOCetaxel

### ABOUT THIS MEDICATION

#### What is this drug used for?

- Docetaxel is a drug given to treat cancer of the esophagus and stomach.

#### How does this drug work?

- Docetaxel works by interfering with dividing cells and preventing an increase in the number of cancer cells.

### INTENDED BENEFITS

- This therapy is being given to destroy and/or limit the growth of cancer cells in your body. This treatment may improve your current symptoms and delay the onset of new symptoms.

### TREATMENT SUMMARY

#### How is this drug given?

- You will receive docetaxel directly into your vein (IV).
- You will receive docetaxel at the clinic by a chemotherapy nurse **for one day only**. This will be followed by a 20 day rest.
- This three week or 21 day period of time is called a “cycle”. The cycle is usually repeated up to a maximum of 6 cycles, but may be changed depending on how the chemotherapy affects you.
- Each treatment will take about 2 hours. Your first treatment will probably take longer, as the chemotherapy nurse will review information on the drug with you.
- You will be given a prescription for **dexamethasone** (e.g. DECADRON®, DEXASONE®, HEXADROL®). 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. **Start taking the dexamethasone the day before your treatment and continue taking it twice a day for 3 days. You must take at least 3 doses before your treatment.** Always take dexamethasone with food.

The calendar below outlines how your medication is given each 3 week cycle.

C Y C L E	DATE	TREATMENT PLAN
	1	
		▶ Week 2 → No treatment
		▶ Week 3 → No treatment

C Y C L E	DATE	TREATMENT PLAN
		▶ Week 1 → Docetaxel IV x 1 day
		▶ Week 2 → No treatment
	2	▶ Week 3 → No treatment

**Treatment is continued for a total of 6 cycles, as long as you are benefitting from treatment and not having too many side effects.**

### **What will happen when I get my drugs?**

- A **blood test** is done each cycle, on or before the first day of each treatment cycle. The dose and timing of your chemotherapy may be changed based on your blood counts and/or other side effects.
- If you need an anti-nausea drug, bring your medication with you to take before each treatment. You may also need to take your anti-nausea medications at home after therapy. However, **nausea is not a frequent side effect of this drug.**

### **SIDE EFFECTS AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM**

Unexpected and unlikely side effects can occur with any drug treatment. The ones listed below are particularly important for you to know as they are directly related to the common actions of the drug in your treatment plan.

Your doctor will review the risks of treatment and possible side effects with you before starting treatment. The chemotherapy nurse will review possible side effects of the drug and how to manage those side effects with you on the day you receive your first treatment.

<b>SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT</b>
<b>Allergic reactions</b> may sometimes occur. Signs of an allergic reaction may include rash, itching, dizziness, swelling or breathing problems, joint or muscle pain.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take your <b>dexamethasone</b> tablets as directed by doctor, pharmacist or nurse.</li> <li>• Tell your nurse if this happens while you are receiving docetaxel or contact your oncologist <b>immediately</b> if this happens after you leave the clinic.</li> </ul>
Docetaxel <b>burns</b> if it leaks under the skin.	Tell your nurse or doctor <b>immediately</b> if you feel burning, stinging, or any other changes while the drug is being given.

SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT	MANAGEMENT
<p><b>Nausea and vomiting</b> may occur after your treatment. Most people have little or no nausea.</p>	<p>Take your <b>dexamethasone</b> tablets as directed by doctor, pharmacist or nurse. You may be given a prescription for anti-nausea drug(s) to take before your chemotherapy treatment and/or at home. <b>It is easier to prevent nausea than treat it once it has occurred</b>, so follow directions closely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids.</li> <li>• Eat and drink often in small amounts.</li> </ul> <p>Try the ideas in the <b><i>Practical Tips to Help Manage Nausea*</i></b></p>
<p><b>Fever</b> sometimes occurs shortly after treatment with docetaxel. Fever should last no longer than 24 hours.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take acetaminophen (e.g., <b>TYLENOL®</b>) every 4-6 hours, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day.</li> <li>• 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. Report this to your doctor <b><i>immediately</i></b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Diarrhea</b> may sometimes occur.</p>	<p>If diarrhea is a problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids.</li> <li>• Eat and drink often in small amounts.</li> <li>• Avoid high fibre foods as outlined in <a href="#">Food Choices to Help Manage Diarrhea*</a></li> </ul>
<p>Your <b>white blood cells</b> may decrease 7 days after your treatment. They usually return to normal 15-21 days after your last treatment. White blood cells protect your body by fighting bacteria (germs) that cause infection. When they are low, <b>you are at greater risk of having an infection.</b></p>	<p>To help prevent infection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wash your hands often and always after using the bathroom.</li> <li>• Avoid crowds and people who are sick.</li> <li>• Take care of your skin and mouth.</li> <li>• Call your doctor <b><i>immediately</i></b> 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.</li> </ul>

OTHER SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT	MANAGEMENT
<p><b>Pain or tenderness</b> may occur where the needle was placed.</p>	<p>Apply cool compresses or soak in cool water for 15-20 minutes several times a day.</p>

OTHER SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT	MANAGEMENT
<p><b>Fluid retention</b> may occur. Signs of extra fluid build-up are <b>swelling</b> of feet, hands or belly, breathing problems, cough, or rapid weight gain.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take your <b>dexamethasone</b> tablets as directed by doctor, pharmacist, or nurse.</li> <li>• Tell your doctor at your next visit.</li> <li>• Elevate your feet when sitting.</li> <li>• Avoid tight clothing.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sore mouth</b> may sometimes occur a few days after treatment. Mouth sores can occur on the tongue, the sides of the mouth, or in the throat. <b>Mouth sores or bleeding gums can lead to an infection.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Make a mouthwash with ½ teaspoon baking soda or salt in 1 cup warm water and rinse several times a day.</li> <li>• Try ideas in <b><i>Food Ideas to Try with a Sore Mouth*</i></b>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Skin rashes</b> may sometimes occur. Rashes generally resolve before the next treatment.</p>	<p>To help itching:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You can use calamine lotion.</li> <li>• If very irritating, call your doctor during office hours</li> <li>• Otherwise mention it at your next visit.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Nail changes</b> such as change in colour may occur. Rarely, nails will loosen or fall off, or the nail beds will be painful.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You may be given frozen gloves to wear on your hands during your treatment to help prevent nail changes.</li> <li>• Take acetaminophen (e.g., <b>TYLENOL®</b>) every 3-4 hours if nails are painful.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Muscle or joint pain</b> may occur a few days after your treatment.</p>	<p>You may take acetaminophen (e.g., <b>TYLENOL®</b>) every 4-6 hours to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day or ibuprofen (e.g., <b>ADVIL®</b>) for mild to moderate pain. Tell your doctor if the pain interferes with your activity.</p>
<p><b>Tiredness</b> and lack of energy may commonly occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired.</li> <li>• Try the ideas in <a href="#">the handout titled <i>Fatigue/Tiredness*</i></a></li> </ul>
<p><b>Hair loss</b> is common and may begin within a few days or weeks of treatment. Your hair may thin 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. Colour and texture may change.</p>	<p>Refer to <a href="#">Resources for hair loss and appearance changes*</a>. You may also want to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply mineral oil to your scalp to reduce itching.</li> <li>• If you lose your eyelashes and eyebrows, protect your eyes from dust and grit with a broad-rimmed hat and glasses.</li> </ul>

OTHER SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT	MANAGEMENT
<p><b>Numbness or tingling of the fingers or toes</b> may sometimes occur. This will slowly return to normal once your treatments are over. This may take several months.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be careful when handling items that are sharp, hot, or cold.</li> <li>• Tell your doctor at your next visit, especially if you have trouble with buttons, writing, or picking up small objects.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hand-foot skin reaction</b> 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid tight-fitting shoes or rubbing pressure to hands and feet, such as that caused by heavy activity.</li> <li>• Avoid tight-fitting jewellery.</li> <li>• Clean hands and feet with lukewarm water and gently pat to dry; avoid hot water.</li> <li>• Apply a sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of at least 30.</li> <li>• Apply lanolin-containing creams (e.g., BAG BALM®, UDDERLY SMOOTH®) to hands and feet, liberally and often.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>

**\*Please ask your chemotherapy nurse, pharmacist, or dietitian for a copy.**

### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PATIENT**

- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or **allergic reaction** to docetaxel, paclitaxel or cabazitaxel before receiving docetaxel.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of docetaxel.
- 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, and other health professionals that you are being treated with docetaxel before you receive any treatment from them.

### **Medication Interactions**

Other drugs such as disulfiram (ANTABUSE®), metronidazole (FLAGYL®) and ketoconazole (APO-KETOCONAZOLE®) may interact with docetaxel. Tell your doctor if you are taking these or any other drugs as you may need extra blood tests or your dose may need to be changed.

Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start or stop taking any other drugs.

## THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS VERY IMPORTANT

### 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 problems** 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-coloured stools.
- 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.

**If you experience symptoms or changes in your body that have not been described above but worry you, or if any symptoms are severe, contact:**

\_\_\_\_\_ at telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_