

For the Patient: GIPGEMABR

Other Names: [First Line Treatment of Locally Advanced and Metastatic Pancreatic Cancer with Paclitaxel NAB \(ABRAXANE\) and Gemcitabine](#)

GI = GastroIntestinal

P = Pancreas

GEMABR = Gemcitabine and **ABRAXANE** (Paclitaxel [NAB](#), [nab-Paclitaxel](#))

ABOUT THIS MEDICATION

What are the drugs used for?

- Gemcitabine and [Paclitaxel NAB](#) are two drugs that are given to treat cancer of the pancreas. They are given directly into the vein (you may also hear the terms “intravenously” or “IV”).
- [Nab-Paclitaxel](#) is a nanoparticle, albumin-bound paclitaxel often referred to as “Abraxane®” which is the brand name of the drug.

How do these drugs work?

- Gemcitabine and [Paclitaxel NAB](#) work 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.
- It may take a number of treatments before your doctor can judge whether or not this treatment is helping.

TREATMENT SUMMARY

How are these drugs given?

- Gemcitabine and [Paclitaxel NAB](#) are given directly into the vein (IV).
- They will be given to you at the clinic by a chemotherapy nurse. Each treatment will take **about 1 ½ hours**. Your first treatment will probably take longer, as the nurse will review information on the chemotherapy drugs with you.
- You will receive the drugs once a week for 3 weeks in a row. You will then have a one week break. This 28 day period of time is called a “cycle”.

	DATE	TREATMENT PLAN
C Y C L E		▶ Week 1 → Gemcitabine and Paclitaxel NAB IV x 1 day
		▶ Week 2 → Gemcitabine and Paclitaxel NAB IV x 1 day
		▶ Week 3 → Gemcitabine and Paclitaxel NAB IV x 1 day
		Week 4 → No Treatment

The cycles are continued as long as you are benefiting from treatment and not having too many side effects, as determined by your oncologist.

What will happen when I get my drugs?

- A blood test is done on or before the first day of each treatment. The dose and timing of your chemotherapy may be changed based on your blood counts and/or other side effects.

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 be aware of as they are directly related to the common actions of the drugs 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 Gemcitabine and Paclitaxel NAB, and how to manage those side effects with you on the day you receive your first treatment.

SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT	MANAGEMENT
<p>Allergic reactions may rarely occur. Signs of an allergic reaction may include flushing, dizziness, breathing problems, fast or uneven heart beat, or chest pain.</p> <p>This can occur immediately or several hours after receiving nab-paclitaxel.</p>	<p>Tell your nurse if this happens while you are receiving nab-paclitaxel or contact your oncologist immediately if this happens after you leave the clinic.</p>
<p>Nab-paclitaxel burns if it leaks under the skin.</p>	<p>Tell your nurse or doctor immediately if you feel burning, stinging, or any other change while the drug is being given.</p>
<p>Numbness or tingling of the fingers or toes commonly occurs. This will slowly (over several weeks) return to normal once your treatments are over.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<p>Nausea and vomiting may occur after your treatment and may last for 24 hours. It is usually mild to moderate.</p>	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink plenty of liquids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Try the ideas in <i>Food Choices to Control Nausea</i>.

SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT	MANAGEMENT
<p>A flu-like illness may occur shortly after your treatment. You may have fever, chills, headache, muscle and joint aches. Flu-like symptoms usually disappear on their own.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the first 48 hours after treatment, take acetaminophen (eg, TYLENOL®) every 4 hours as needed, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day. • Fever and chills which occur more than 48 hours after treatment, may be signs of an infection. They should be reported to the doctor immediately.
<p>Your white blood cells will decrease after your 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.</p>	<p>To help prevent infection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash your hands often and always after using the bathroom. • Take care of your skin and mouth. • Avoid crowds and people who are sick. • Call your doctor 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.
<p>Your platelets will decrease after your treatment. Platelets help to make your blood clot when you hurt yourself. You may bruise or bleed more easily than usual.</p>	<p>To help prevent bleeding problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>Some medications such as ASA (e.g., ASPIRIN®) or ibuprofen (e.g., ADVIL®) may increase your risk of bleeding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not stop taking any medication that has been prescribed by your doctor (e.g., ASA for your heart). • For minor pain, try acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) first, but occasional use of ibuprofen may be acceptable.
<p>Diarrhea may sometimes occur.</p>	<p>To help diarrhea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink plenty of fluids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Avoid high fibre foods as outline in <i>Food Ideas to Help with Diarrhea During Chemotherapy*</i>. • Call your cancer doctor if you have four stools a day more than usual or diarrhea during the night.

SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT	MANAGEMENT
<p>Constipation may sometimes occur with Paclitaxel NAB.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise if you can. • Drink plenty of fluids. • Try ideas in <i>Suggestions for Dealing with Constipation</i>.*
<p>Sore mouth may occur during 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>Try the ideas in <i>Food Ideas for a Sore Mouth During Chemotherapy</i>.*</p>

OTHER SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT	MANAGEMENT
<p>Pain or tenderness 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>
<p>Muscle or joint pain may sometimes occur a few days after your treatment.</p>	<p>You may take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day for mild to moderate pain. Tell your doctor if the pain interferes with your activity.</p>
<p>Skin Rash may occur after treatment. It may or may not be itchy.</p>	<p>Apply hydrocortisone cream 0.5% sparingly 3-4 times daily.</p>
<p>Swelling of hands, feet, or lower legs may rarely occur if your body retains extra fluid.</p>	<p>If swelling is a problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevate your feet when sitting. • Avoid tight clothing.
<p>Loss of appetite sometimes occurs.</p>	<p>Try the ideas in <i>Food Ideas to Help with Decreased Appetite</i>.*</p>
<p>Tiredness and lack of energy may sometimes occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired. • Try the ideas in <i>Your Bank to Energy Savings: How People with Cancer Can Handle Fatigue</i>.*

OTHER SIDE EFFECTS DURING TREATMENT	MANAGEMENT
<p>Hair loss 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. Hair usually grows back once your treatments are over and sometimes between treatments. Colour and texture may change.</p>	<p>Refer to <i>For the Patient: Hair Loss Due to Chemotherapy</i>.[*] You may also want to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

^{*}Please ask your chemotherapy nurse, pharmacist or dietician for a copy.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PATIENT

- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or **allergic reaction** to Gemcitabine, **Paclitaxel NAB**, Paclitaxel, or human albumin before receiving treatment.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of Gemcitabine or **Paclitaxel NAB**.
- Gemcitabine and **Paclitaxel NAB** may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use **birth control** while being treated with these drugs. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breast feed during treatment.
- **Tell** doctors, dentists, and other health professionals that you are being treated with Gemcitabine and **Paclitaxel NAB** before you receive any treatment from them.
- If you need an anti-nauseant drug, bring your pills with you to take before each treatment.

Medication Interactions

- Other drugs such as warfarin (COUMADIN®) may interact with gemcitabine. Tell your doctor if you are taking this or 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 taking any new drugs.

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS VERY IMPORTANT

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

- Signs of an **allergic reaction** soon after a treatment including flushing, dizziness, face swelling, breathing problems, fast or uneven heart beat, or chest pain.
- Signs of **heart or lung problems** such as fast or uneven heartbeat, chest pain, chest pressure, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, or fainting.
- 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; pain or burning when you pass urine; painful, tender, or swollen red skin wounds or sores.
- Signs of **bleeding problems** such as black, tarry stools; blood in urine; pinpoint red spots on skin; extensive bruising.

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

- **Numbness or tingling** in **face, feet, or hands** or **weakness in facial muscles**.
- **Changes in eyesight**, sensitivity to light, or eye pain.
- Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-coloured stools.
- Signs of **kidney problems** such as lower back or side pain, swelling of feet or lower legs, numbness or tingling in feet or hands, blood in urine or cloudy urine.

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

- Uncontrolled **nausea, vomiting, constipation, or diarrhea**.
- Signs of **anemia** such as unusual tiredness or weakness.
- Dry mouth, increased thirst, or decreased urine.
- Continuing muscle or joint pain.
- 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 or difficulty swallowing comfortably.
- Itching or skin rash (with or without itching).
- Cough.
- Swelling of feet or lower legs.
- Nail changes.
- Excessive drowsiness.

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: _____