

# Waldenstrom macroglobulinaemia DRC (dexamethasone rituximab CYCLOPHOSPHamide)

ID: 1654 v.5 Endorsed Essential Medicine List

Patients with lymphoma should be considered for inclusion into clinical trials. Link to [ALLG website](#), [ANZCTR website](#) and [Lymphoma Australia website](#).

This protocol is based on limited evidence; refer to the evidence section of this protocol for more information.

Link to [Medical and Scientific Advisory Group \(MSAG\) Consensus clinical practice guidelines for the treatment of patients with Waldenström Macroglobulinaemia](#)

The anticancer drug(s) in this protocol may have been included in the ADDIKD guideline. Dose recommendations in kidney dysfunction have yet to be updated to align with the ADDIKD guideline. Recommendations will be updated once the individual protocol has been evaluated by the reference committee. For further information refer to the ADDIKD guideline. To assist with calculations, use the [eviQ Estimated Glomerular Filtration Rate \(eGFR\) calculator](#).

## International Consensus Guideline for Anticancer Drug Dosing in Kidney Dysfunction (ADDIKD)

2022

[Click here](#)



### Treatment schedule - Overview

#### Cycle 1 to 6

Drug	Dose	Route	Day
Dexamethasone	20 mg	IV infusion	1
Rituximab	375 mg/m <sup>2</sup>	IV infusion	1
CYCLOPHOSPHamide	100 mg/m <sup>2</sup> TWICE a day	PO	1 to 5

**Frequency:** 21 days

**Cycles:** 6

#### Notes:

- The incidence of an initial IgM flare was low at 32% with the DRC protocol compared to other studies. Of these, only 11% of patients experienced an increase in IgM equal to or greater than 25%. The IgM flare did not have clinical consequences such as resulting in symptoms or signs of hyperviscosity in any patient in the study.<sup>1</sup> It is thought that the concomitant administration of cyclophosphamide may explain the lower incidence. However, in patients who present with high serum IgM monoclonal paraproteins, pheresis may need to be considered before administration of rituximab-based therapies.

**Drug status:** All drugs in this protocol are on the [PBS general schedule](#)

Cyclophosphamide is available as **50 mg** tablets

**Cost:** ~ \$480 per cycle

### Treatment schedule - Detail

*The supportive therapies (e.g. antiemetics, premedications, etc.), infusion times, diluents, volumes and routes of administration, if included, are listed as defaults. They may vary between institutions and can be substituted to reflect individual institutional policy.*

## Cycle 1 to 6

Day 1		
Paracetamol	1,000 mg (PO)	60 minutes before treatment
Loratadine	10 mg (PO)	60 minutes before treatment
Dexamethasone	20 mg (IV infusion)	in 100 mL sodium chloride 0.9% over 15 minutes
Rituximab	375 mg/m <sup>2</sup> (IV infusion)	in 500 mL sodium chloride 0.9% as per graded administration rate
CYCLOPHOSPHamide	100 mg/m <sup>2</sup> (PO)	TWICE a day on days 1 to 5
Day 2 to 5		
CYCLOPHOSPHamide	100 mg/m <sup>2</sup> (PO)	TWICE a day on days 1 to 5

The incidence of an initial IgM flare was low at 32% with the DRC protocol compared to other studies. Of these, only 11% of patients experienced an increase in IgM equal to or greater than 25%. The IgM flare did not have clinical consequences such as resulting in symptoms or signs of hyperviscosity in any patient in the study.<sup>1</sup> It is thought that the concomitant administration of cyclophosphamide may explain the lower incidence. However, in patients who present with high serum IgM monoclonal paraproteins, pheresis may need to be considered before administration of rituximab-based therapies.

**Frequency:** 21 days

**Cycles:** 6

## Indications and patient population

Waldenstrom macroglobulinaemia

## Clinical information

<b>Caution with oral anti-cancer drugs</b>	Select links for information on the safe prescribing, dispensing and administration of orally administered anti-cancer drugs. Read more about the <a href="#">COSA guidelines</a> and <a href="#">oral anti-cancer therapy</a>
<b>Venous access required</b>	IV cannula (IVC) or central venous access device (CVAD) is required to administer this treatment. Read more about <a href="#">central venous access device line selection</a>
<b>Hypersensitivity/infusion related reaction</b>	High risk with rituximab. Read more about <a href="#">Hypersensitivity reaction</a>
<b>Premedication</b>	The product information states that premedication is required for this treatment. <b>Note:</b> a corticosteroid is included as part of this treatment and therefore additional corticosteroid may not be required as premedication. Please refer to the treatment schedule for the suggested premedication regimen. This may be substituted to reflect institutional policy.

<b>Antiemetics for multi-day protocols</b>	<p>Antiemetic therapy should be administered throughout the duration of the chemotherapy protocol and to cover delayed nausea. The acute and delayed emetic risk of multi-day chemotherapy protocols will overlap depending on the individual drugs and their sequence of administration. More or less antiemetic cover may be required.</p> <p>As a steroid has been included as part of this protocol, additional antiemetic steroids are not required.</p> <p>Ensure that patients also have sufficient antiemetics for breakthrough emesis:</p> <p>Metoclopramide 10 mg three times a day when necessary (maximum of 30 mg/24 hours, up to 5 days) OR</p> <p>Prochlorperazine 10 mg PO every 6 hours when necessary.</p> <p>Read more about <a href="#">preventing anti-cancer therapy induced nausea and vomiting</a></p>
<b>Rituximab rapid infusion</b>	<p>This regimen is not in line with the product monograph, however published literature indicates that it can be completed safely.</p> <p>Read more about the <a href="#">rapid infusion of rituximab</a></p>
<b>Progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy</b>	<p>Use of monoclonal antibodies may be associated with an increased risk of progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML), a rare but potentially fatal opportunistic viral infection of the brain. Patients must be monitored for any new or worsening neurological symptoms.</p> <p>Read more about <a href="#">progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy</a> and the <a href="#">Therapeutic Goods Administration Medicines Safety update on progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy</a> from the Australian Government, Department of Health.</p>
<b>Corticosteroids</b>	<p>Diabetic patients should monitor their blood glucose levels closely. To minimise gastric irritation, advise patient to take immediately after food. Consider the use of a H2 antagonist or proton pump inhibitor if appropriate.</p> <p>Read more about <a href="#">acute short term effects from corticosteroids</a></p>
<b>Tumour lysis risk</b>	<p>Assess patient for risk of developing tumour lysis syndrome.</p> <p>Read more about <a href="#">prevention and management of tumour lysis syndrome</a>.</p>
<b>Pneumocystis jirovecii pneumonia (PJP) prophylaxis</b>	<p>PJP prophylaxis is recommended e.g. trimethoprim/sulfamethoxazole 160/800 mg PO one tablet twice daily, twice weekly (e.g. on Mondays and Thursdays) OR one tablet three times weekly (e.g. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays).</p> <p>Read more about <a href="#">prophylaxis of pneumocystis jirovecii (carinii) in cancer patients</a></p>
<b>Antiviral prophylaxis</b>	<p>Antiviral prophylaxis is recommended.</p> <p>Read more about <a href="#">antiviral prophylaxis</a> drugs and doses</p>
<b>Antifungal prophylaxis</b>	<p>The use of prophylaxis should be at the discretion of the treating clinician and based on patient risk factors and local guidelines.</p> <p>Read more about <a href="#">antifungal prophylaxis</a> drugs and doses.</p>
<b>Biosimilar drug</b>	<p>Read more about biosimilar drugs on the <a href="#">Biosimilar Awareness Initiative</a> page</p>
<b>Blood tests</b>	<p>FBC, EUC, eGFR, LFTs, LDH and BSL at baseline, prior to each cycle and regularly throughout treatment as clinically indicated.</p>
<b>Hepatitis B screening and prophylaxis</b>	<p>Routine screening for HBsAg and anti-HBc is recommended prior to initiation of treatment. Prophylaxis should be determined according to individual institutional policy.</p> <p>Read more about <a href="#">hepatitis B screening and prophylaxis in cancer patients requiring cytotoxic and/or immunosuppressive therapy</a></p>
<b>Vaccinations</b>	<p>Live vaccines are contraindicated in cancer patients receiving immunosuppressive therapy and/or who have poorly controlled malignant disease.</p> <p>Refer to the recommended schedule of vaccination for immunocompromised patients, as outlined in the <a href="#">Australian Immunisation Handbook</a>.</p> <p>Read more about <a href="#">COVID-19 vaccines and cancer</a>.</p>

<b>Fertility, pregnancy and lactation</b>	<p>Cancer treatment can have harmful effects on fertility and this should be discussed with all patients of reproductive potential prior to commencing treatment. There is a risk of foetal harm in pregnant women. A pregnancy test should be considered prior to initiating treatment in females of reproductive potential if sexually active. It is important that all patients of reproductive potential use effective contraception whilst on therapy and after treatment finishes. Effective contraception methods and adequate contraception timeframe should be discussed with all patients of reproductive potential. Possibility of infant risk should be discussed with breastfeeding patients.</p> <p>Read more about the <a href="#">effect of cancer treatment on fertility</a></p>
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## Dose modifications

*Evidence for dose modifications is limited, and the recommendations made on eviQ are intended as a guide only. They are generally conservative with an emphasis on safety. Any dose modification should be based on clinical judgement, and the individual patient's situation including but not limited to treatment intent (curative vs palliative), the anti-cancer regimen (single versus combination therapy versus chemotherapy versus immunotherapy), biology of the cancer (site, size, mutations, metastases), other treatment related side effects, additional co-morbidities, performance status and patient preferences. Suggested dose modifications are based on clinical trial findings, product information, published guidelines and reference committee consensus. The dose reduction applies to each individual dose and not to the total number of days or duration of treatment cycle unless stated otherwise. Non-haematological gradings are based on [Common Terminology Criteria for Adverse Events \(CTCAE\)](#) unless otherwise specified. Renal and hepatic dose modifications have been standardised where possible. For more information see dosing considerations & disclaimer.*

The dose recommendations in kidney dysfunction (i.e. renal impairment) displayed may not reflect those in the ADDIKD guideline and have been included for historical reference only. Recommendations will be updated once the individual protocol has been evaluated by the reference committee, with this version of the protocol then being archived. Clinicians are expected to refer to the ADDIKD guideline prior to prescribing in kidney dysfunction.

[International Consensus Guideline for Anticancer Drug Dosing in Kidney Dysfunction \(ADDIKD\).](#)

**Haematological toxicity**

Dose reductions for haematological toxicity not usually recommended. Discuss with Haematologist.

## Interactions

*Drug interactions in eviQ protocols are under review and being updated to align with current literature. Further site-wide updates and changes will occur in due course. References & Disclaimer*

*The drug interactions shown below are not an exhaustive list. For a more comprehensive list and for detailed information on specific drug interactions and clinical management, please refer to the specific drug product information and the following key resources:*

- [MIMS - interactions tab](#) (includes link to a CYP-450 table) (login required)
- [Australian Medicines Handbook \(AMH\) – interactions tab](#) (login required)
- [Micromedex Drug Interactions](#) (login required)
- [Cancer Drug Interactions](#)
- [Cytochrome P450 Drug Interactions](#)

Cyclophosphamide		
	Interaction	Clinical management
<b>CYP3A4 inducers (e.g. carbamazepine, phenytoin, phenobarbitone, rifampicin, St John's wort etc.)</b>	Increased toxicity of cyclophosphamide possible due to increased conversion to active (and inactive) metabolites	Avoid combination or monitor for cyclophosphamide toxicity
<b>CYP3A4 inhibitors (e.g. aprepitant, azole antifungals, clarithromycin, erythromycin, grapefruit juice, ritonavir etc.)</b>	Reduced efficacy of cyclophosphamide possible due to decreased conversion to active (and inactive) metabolites	Avoid combination or monitor for decreased clinical response to cyclophosphamide
<b>Nephrotoxic drugs (e.g. aminoglycosides, amphotericin, contrast dye, frusemide, NSAIDs)</b>	Additive nephrotoxicity	Avoid combination or monitor kidney function closely
<b>Amiodarone</b>	Possible additive pulmonary toxicity with high-dose cyclophosphamide (i.e. doses used prior to stem cell transplant; 60 mg/kg daily or 120 to 270 mg/kg over a few days)	Avoid combination or monitor closely for pulmonary toxicity
<b>Allopurinol, hydrochlorothiazide, indapamide</b>	Delayed effect. Increased risk of bone marrow depression; probably due to reduced clearance of active metabolites of cyclophosphamide	Avoid combination, consider alternative antihypertensive therapy or monitor for myelosuppression
<b>Ciclosporin</b>	Reduced efficacy of ciclosporin due to reduced serum concentration	Monitor ciclosporin levels; adjust dosage as appropriate; monitor response to ciclosporin
<b>Suxamethonium</b>	Prolonged apnoea due to marked and persistent inhibition of cholinesterase by cyclophosphamide	Alert the anaesthetist if a patient has been treated with cyclophosphamide within ten days of planned general anaesthesia

Dexamethasone		
	Interaction	Clinical management
<b>CYP3A4 interactions</b>	Dexamethasone is a substrate of CYP3A4 and a weak to moderate inducer of CYP3A4. The clinical relevance of CYP3A4 induction by dexamethasone is unknown as the mechanism has yet to be established	The effects of the concomitant use of dexamethasone with other CYP3A4 inducers, inhibitors or substrates is variable. If used concomitantly, monitor patients closely for adverse drug reactions
<b>Warfarin</b>	Concurrent use may result in increased risk of bleeding or diminished effects of warfarin	Monitor prothrombin time / INR (especially during initiation or discontinuation) and for signs of drug toxicity during concomitant use; adjust warfarin dose as required
<b>Oral hypoglycaemics</b>	Corticosteroids may cause hyperglycaemia and worsen diabetes control	Monitor blood glucose levels and adjust oral hypoglycaemic dose as required

Rituximab		
	Interaction	Clinical management
<b>Antihypertensives</b>	Additive hypotensive effect	Consider withholding antihypertensive medications 12 hours prior to the rituximab infusion
<b>Immunosuppressants (eg. abatacept and baricitinib etc.)</b>	Increased risk of infection	Concurrent use not recommended. If an immunosuppressant must be used, monitor closely for signs of infection

General		
	Interaction	Clinical management
<b>Warfarin</b>	Anti-cancer drugs may alter the anticoagulant effect of warfarin.	Monitor INR regularly and adjust warfarin dosage as appropriate; consider alternative anticoagulant.
<b>Direct oral anticoagulants (DOACs) e.g. apixaban, rivaroxaban, dabigatran</b>	<p>Interaction with both CYP3A4 and P-gp inhibitors /inducers.</p> <p>DOAC and anti-cancer drug levels may both be altered, possibly leading to loss of efficacy or toxicity (i.e. increased bleeding).</p>	<p>Apixaban: avoid concurrent use with strong <a href="#">CYP3A4</a> and <a href="#">P-gp</a> inhibitors. If treating VTE, avoid use with strong <a href="#">CYP3A4</a> and <a href="#">P-gp</a> inducers.</p> <p>Rivaroxaban: avoid concurrent use with strong <a href="#">CYP3A4</a> and <a href="#">P-gp</a> inhibitors.</p> <p>Dabigatran: avoid combination with strong <a href="#">P-gp</a> inducers and inhibitors.</p> <p>If concurrent use is unavoidable, monitor closely for efficacy/toxicity of both drugs.</p>
<b>Digoxin</b>	Anti-cancer drugs can damage the lining of the intestine; affecting the absorption of digoxin.	Monitor digoxin serum levels; adjust digoxin dosage as appropriate.
<b>Antiepileptics</b>	Both altered antiepileptic and anti-cancer drug levels may occur, possibly leading to loss of efficacy or toxicity.	Where concurrent use of an enzyme-inducing antiepileptic cannot be avoided, monitor antiepileptic serum levels for toxicity, as well as seizure frequency for efficacy; adjust dosage as appropriate. Also monitor closely for efficacy of the anti-cancer therapy.
<b>Antiplatelet agents and NSAIDs</b>	Increased risk of bleeding due to treatment related thrombocytopenia.	Avoid or minimise combination. If combination deemed essential, (e.g. low dose aspirin for ischaemic heart disease) monitor for signs of bleeding.
<b>Serotonergic drugs, including selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs e.g. paroxetine) and serotonin noradrenaline reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs e.g. venlafaxine)</b>	Increased risk of serotonin syndrome with concurrent use of 5-HT <sub>3</sub> receptor antagonists (e.g. palonosetron, ondansetron, granisetron, tropisetron, dolasetron, etc.)	<p>Avoid combination.</p> <p>If combination is clinically warranted, monitor for signs and symptoms of serotonin syndrome (e.g. confusion, agitation, tachycardia, hyperreflexia). For more information link to <a href="#">TGA Medicines Safety Update</a></p>
<b>Vaccines</b>	Diminished response to vaccines and increased risk of infection with live vaccines.	<p>Live vaccines (e.g. BCG, MMR, zoster and varicella) are contraindicated in patients on immunosuppressive therapy. Use with caution in patients on non-immunosuppressive therapy.</p> <p>For more information; refer to the recommended schedule of vaccination for cancer patients, as outlined in the <a href="#">Australian Immunisation Handbook</a></p>

## Administration

*eviQ provides safe and effective instructions on how to administer cancer treatments. However, eviQ does not provide every treatment delivery option, and is unable to provide a comprehensive list of cancer treatment agents and their required IV line giving set/filter. There may be alternative methods of treatment administration, and alternative supportive treatments that are also appropriate. Please refer to the individual*

## Day 1

**Approximate treatment time: 4 to 6 hours (initial); 3 to 4 hours (subsequent)**

[Safe handling and waste management](#)

[Safe administration](#)

[General patient assessment](#) prior to each treatment.

Any toxicity grade 2 or greater may require dose reduction, delay or omission of treatment and review by medical officer before recommencing treatment.

Prime IV line(s).

Insert IV cannula or access [TIVAD](#) or [CVAD](#).

- weigh patient each visit
- dipstick urinalysis each visit

### Dexamethasone

- administer via IV infusion over 15 minutes
- flush with ~ 50mL sodium chloride 0.9%.

## 🕒 Treatment - Time out

### Rituximab

#### Prior to administration:

- check baseline observations
- check for previous adverse events during previous infusions
- verify premedication has been taken. If not, administer 30 to 60 minutes prior to rituximab administration:
  - paracetamol 1000 mg orally AND
  - loratadine 10 mg orally (or similar antihistamine)
  - a steroid may also be included as a premed according to local guidelines: dexamethasone IV (part of this protocol) or hydrocortisone 100 mg IV

#### Initial infusion:

- **commence rituximab** infusion at 50 mg/hr for 30 minutes
- repeat observations prior to each rate increase
- **increase rate** by 50 mg/hr every 30 minutes, up to a maximum of 400 mg/hr if observations are stable
- flush with ~ 100 mL of sodium chloride 0.9%

If an infusion reaction occurs, temporarily discontinue the infusion and notify medical officer

- when symptoms have completely resolved, recommence the infusion at **half the rate** prior to the reaction
- for severe reactions **stop** infusion and manage as per emergency

Transient hypotension may occur. Consider withholding antihypertensive medication for 12 hours before and during infusion.

#### Subsequent infusions:

If an adverse event was experienced with initial infusion recommence infusion at the same rate as initial infusion

If **no** adverse event experienced with initial infusion:

- perform baseline observations and repeat observations prior to each rate increase
- **commence** rituximab infusion at 100 mg/hr
- increase rate by 100 mg/hr increments every 30 minutes to a maximum of 400 mg/hr if observations are stable
- flush with ~ 100 mL of sodium chloride 0.9%

If an infusion reaction occurs, temporarily discontinue the infusion and notify medical officer



- when symptoms have resolved, recommence the infusion at **half the rate** prior to the reaction
- for severe reactions **stop** infusion and manage as per emergency

Read more about rapid infusion rituximab

### Pre treatment medication

Verify antiemetics taken or administer as prescribed.

### ⌚ Chemotherapy - Time out

#### Cyclophosphamide

- administer orally TWICE a day, on **days 1 to 5 of each cycle**
- to be swallowed whole with a glass of water; do not break, crush or chew
- patients should be well hydrated and be encouraged to void frequently during treatment to prevent cyclophosphamide induced bladder irritation.

**Note:** missed doses should not be replaced; if a dose is forgotten or vomited, normal dosing should be resumed at the next scheduled dose.

Remove IV cannula and/or deaccess [TIVAD](#) or [CVAD](#).

Continue [safe handling](#) precautions until 7 days after completion of drug(s)

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### Days 2 to 5

This is an oral treatment

[Safe handling and waste management](#)

[Safe administration](#)

[General patient assessment](#) prior to each treatment.

Any toxicity grade 2 or greater may require dose reduction, delay or omission of treatment and review by medical officer before recommencing treatment.

### Pre treatment medication

Verify antiemetics taken or administer as prescribed.

### ⌚ Chemotherapy - Time out

#### Cyclophosphamide

- administer orally TWICE a day, on **days 1 to 5 of each cycle**
- to be swallowed whole with a glass of water; do not break, crush or chew
- patients should be well hydrated and be encouraged to void frequently during treatment to prevent cyclophosphamide induced bladder irritation.

**Note:** missed doses should not be replaced; if a dose is forgotten or vomited, normal dosing should be resumed at the next scheduled dose.

Continue [safe handling](#) precautions until 7 days after completion of drug(s)

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### Discharge information

#### Cyclophosphamide tablets

- Cyclophosphamide tablets with written instructions on how to take them.

#### Antiemetics

- Antiemetics as prescribed.

#### Prophylaxis medications

- Prophylaxis medications (if prescribed) i.e. tumour lysis prophylaxis, PJP prophylaxis, antifungals, antivirals.

#### Patient information

- Ensure patient receives patient information sheet.

## Side effects

*The side effects listed below are not a complete list of all possible side effects for this treatment. Side effects are categorised into the approximate onset of presentation and should only be used as a guide.*

### Immediate (onset hours to days)

<b>Flu-like symptoms</b>	
<b>Hypersensitivity reaction</b>	Anaphylaxis and infusion related reactions can occur with this treatment. Read more about <a href="#">hypersensitivity reaction</a>
<b>Nausea and vomiting</b>	Read more about <a href="#">prevention of treatment induced nausea and vomiting</a>

### Early (onset days to weeks)

<b>Neutropenia</b>	Abnormally low levels of neutrophils in the blood. This increases the risk of infection. Any fever or suspicion of infection should be investigated immediately and managed aggressively. Read more about <a href="#">immediate management of neutropenic fever</a>
<b>Thrombocytopenia</b>	A reduction in the normal levels of functional platelets, increasing the risk of abnormal bleeding.  Read more about <a href="#">thrombocytopenia</a>
<b>Constipation</b>	
<b>Fatigue</b>	Read more about <a href="#">fatigue</a>
<b>Haemorrhagic cystitis</b>	An inflammatory process, characterised by diffuse bladder mucosal inflammation resulting in haemorrhage. Patients are at risk following blood and marrow transplant (BMT) or treatment with cyclophosphamide, ifosfamide and/or radiation therapy. Read more about <a href="#">haemorrhagic cystitis</a>
<b>Oral mucositis</b>	Erythematous and ulcerative lesions of the gastrointestinal tract (GIT). It commonly develops following chemotherapy, radiation therapy to the head, neck or oesophagus, and high dose chemotherapy followed by a blood and marrow transplant (BMT). Read more about <a href="#">oral mucositis</a>
<b>Side effects of corticosteroids</b>	Insomnia, oedema, increased risk of infection e.g. oral thrush, gastric irritation, worsening of peptic ulcer disease, increased blood sugar levels, loss of diabetic control, mood and behavioural changes - including anxiety, euphoria, depression, mood swings, increased appetite and weight gain, osteoporosis and fractures (long term use), bruising and skin fragility are associated with corticosteroid use.

### Late (onset weeks to months)

<b>Anaemia</b>	Abnormally low levels of red blood cells (RBCs) or haemoglobin in the blood. Read more about <a href="#">anaemia</a>
<b>Alopecia</b>	Hair loss may occur from all parts of the body. Patients can also experience mild to moderate discomfort of the hair follicles, and rarely pain as the hair is falling out. Read more about <a href="#">alopecia</a> and <a href="#">scalp cooling</a>
<b>Progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML)</b>	A rare opportunistic viral infection of the brain, usually leading to death or severe disability, can occur with monoclonal antibodies (e.g. rituximab, obinutuzumab, ofatumumab, brentuximab vedotin) and other targeted therapies (e.g. ibrutinib, ruxolitinib, idelalisib). Onset may occur up to months after the final dose. Read more about <a href="#">progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML)</a>

Delayed (onset months to years)	
<b>Pulmonary toxicity</b>	Pulmonary toxicity may include damage to the lungs, airways, pleura and pulmonary circulation. Read more about <a href="#">pulmonary toxicity associated with anti-cancer drugs</a>

## Evidence

Waldenstrom Macroglobulinaemia (WM) is a distinct B cell lymphoma with lymphoplasmacytic bone marrow infiltration and presence of an IgM monoclonal paraprotein. Patients with asymptomatic WM with a low beta-2 microglobulin and Hb greater than 120 g/L, may have an indolent course and not require therapy. Symptomatic patients with WM should be considered for immediate treatment to control symptoms, as well as to reverse or prevent complications of WM.

The Fourth International Workshop on WM, held in June 2007, recommended through their consensus panel of experts that the use of extended-dose rituximab as well as combination therapy with alkylating agents and/or nucleoside analogs were reasonable choices for the first-line or salvage treatment of WM in comparison to single agent therapy.<sup>2</sup> However, randomised studies to address the efficacy and impact of such novel regimens were recommended, and that individually tailored therapy including eligibility for autologous transplantation would impact on the choice of first line and salvage therapy of such patients. For patients eligible for autologous transplantation, exposure to alkylating agents and nucleoside analogs should be limited due to risk of stem cell damage by these agents.<sup>1, 2</sup>

A multicentre, prospective trial was conducted by Dimopoulos et. al between 2002 to 2006. 72 patients were enrolled and received the dexamethasone, rituximab, and cyclophosphamide (DRC) regimen as first line therapy for symptomatic WM. Courses were repeated every 21 days for 6 courses. Patients median age was 69 years. The majority of these patients had advanced disease with a median serum monoclonal paraprotein of 36 g/L (range 3 to 117 g/L) which was predominantly kappa in 78%. Treatment consisted of dexamethasone 20 mg intravenously followed by rituximab 375 mg/m<sup>2</sup> intravenously on day 1 and cyclophosphamide 100 mg/m<sup>2</sup> orally twice a day on days 1 to 5 (total dose 1000 mg/m<sup>2</sup>). Patients who achieved stable disease or no disease progression were observed.<sup>1</sup>

Complete response (CR) was defined as a complete disappearance of disease at all involved sites and a negative serum immunofixation. Partial response (PR) was defined as a greater than 50% reduction of serum monoclonal paraprotein along with a greater than 50% reduction of tumour burden at all sites of involvement. A minor response was defined as an equal to 25% but less than a 50% reduction in serum monoclonal paraprotein and no new signs of active disease.<sup>1</sup>

Longer-term follow-up of these data have been published.<sup>2</sup> After a minimum follow-up of 7 years for all patients, 83% achieved a response, with median progression-free survival (PFS) of 35 months. This data was felt to compare favourably with results achieved in other front-line studies.

No randomised comparative data of DRC against other therapies has been published. At ASH 2016, Paludo et al.<sup>3, 4</sup> presented a retrospective review of patients treated at the Mayo clinic between January 2007 and December 2014. This analysis looked at the outcomes in WM patients who received DRC (n=50) and Bendamustine-Rituximab (BR; n=44). Patients achieved similar overall response rates (ORR) with both regimens, although there was a non-significant trend to more rapid achievement of best response in the BR group (11 v 6.1 months, p=0.13). 2 year PFS was not statistically different, but with a strong trend favouring the BR group (53% v 66%, p=0.08).

This study also investigated the role of DRC in the relapsed setting. 50 patients had a median time to best response of 6.8 months, with an ORR of 87%, (68% ≥ PR). Median PFS was 32 months.

The 10th International Workshop on Waldenstrom's Macroglobulinaemia<sup>5</sup> considered DRC to be an appropriate first-line combination therapy, especially in frail patients. Furthermore, they agreed, in general terms, that DRC could be considered in the relapsed setting for patients treated with an alternative therapy in first-line, or where first-line DRC was associated with a prolonged response duration (> 2 years).

Source	Study & year published	Supports use	Is the dose and regimen consistent with the protocol?	Comments
<b>Phase II trials</b>	Dimopoulos et al., 2007 <sup>1</sup> Kastritis et al., 2015 <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Yes	Trial performed in previously untreated patients with symptomatic WM
<b>Case series</b>	Paludo et al., 2016 <sup>3</sup>	Yes	N/A	Previously untreated

Source	Study & year published	Supports use	Is the dose and regimen consistent with the protocol?	Comments
				and relapsed/refractory patients with WM
Guidelines	Date published/revised	Supports use	Is the dose and regimen consistent with the protocol?	Comments
NCCN	2023	Yes	N/A	-
BCCA	N/A	N/A	N/A	-
ESMO	2018	Yes	N/A	-

Efficacy

On an intent-to-treat basis, 83% of patients (95% CI, 73 to 91%) achieved a response, including 7% complete, 67% partial and 9% minor responses. The median time to response was 4.1 months. The 2 year PFS rate for all patients was 67%; and for patients who responded to DRC, it was 80%. The 2 year disease-specific survival rate was 90%.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 1. Time to progression<sup>1</sup>

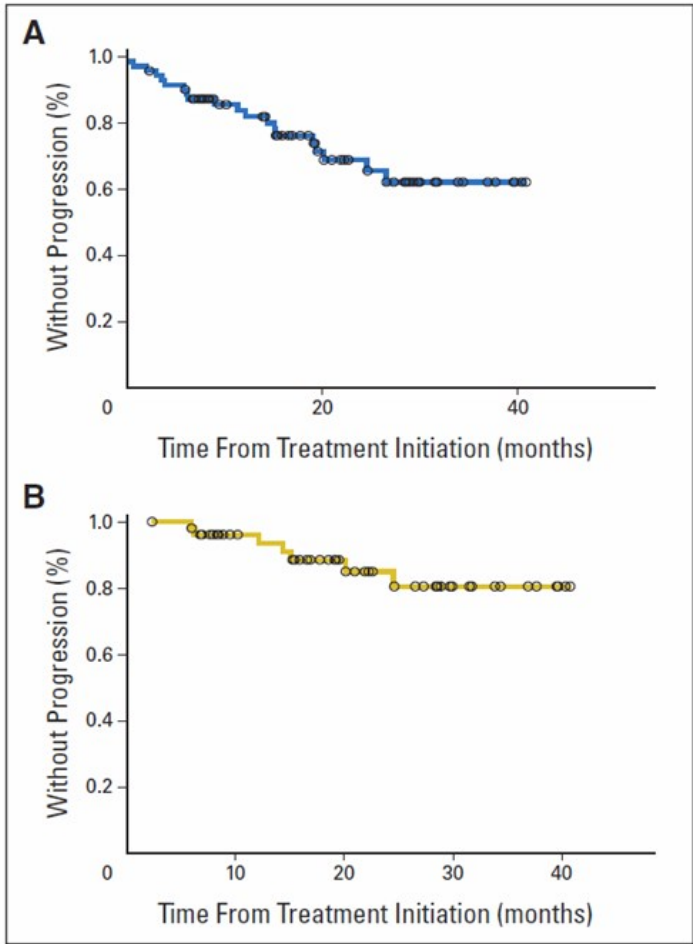


Fig 1. Time to progression for (A) all patients and (B) for those who responded to dexamethasone, rituximab, and cyclophosphamide.

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Toxicity

Treatment was well tolerated, with 9% of patients experiencing grade 3 to 4 neutropenia and approximately 20% of patients experienced rituximab related toxicity.<sup>1</sup>

Table 1. Toxicity of treatment with DRC<sup>1</sup>

Table 2. Toxicity of Treatment With DRC (percentage of patients affected)					
Toxicity	Grade				
	0	1	2	3	4
Neutropenia	66	15	10	7	2
Thrombocytopenia	93	7	0	0	0
Nausea/vomiting	62	25	13	0	0
Chills/fever	84	12	4	0	0
Headache	81	15	2	2	0
Hypotension	94	2	0	4	0
Alopecia	78	18	4	0	0

Abbreviation: DRC, dexamethasone, rituximab, and cyclophosphamide.

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## History

### Version 5

Date	Summary of changes
<b>28/04/2023</b>	<p>Reviewed electronically by Haematology reference committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added a flag linking to Medical and Scientific Advisory Group (MSAG) Consensus clinical practice guidelines for the treatment of patients with Waldenström Macroglobulinaemia</li> <li>Tidied notes under cycles in the treatment schedule</li> <li>Updated the indication from "Symptomatic relapsed/refractory Waldenstrom macroglobulinaemia" to "Waldenstrom macroglobulinaemia"</li> </ul> <p>Increased to v.5 for review in 4 years.</p>

### Version 4

Date	Summary of changes
<b>09/03/2020</b>	Biosimilar rituximab added to clinical information. Version number changed to V.4
<b>27/03/2020</b>	Reviewed by Haematology Reference Committee with no significant changes, review in 4 years
<b>20/01/2022</b>	Interactions updated.
<b>24/01/2022</b>	Pulmonary toxicity added to side effects.

### Version 3

Date	Summary of changes
27/06/2014	New protocol taken to Haematology Reference Committee meeting.
20/11/2014	Approved and published on eviQ.
20/06/2016	Drug status updated as per PBS: Replaced 'Rituximab is TGA registered but not PBS listed for this indication' with 'Rituximab: (PBS authority)'.
31/05/2017	Transferred to new eviQ website. Version number change to V.2.
24/11/2017	Reviewed at Haematology Reference Committee meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Treatment schedule: notes section update to reflect current practice</li><li>• Evidence updated</li></ul> Version number change to V.3.
13/09/2019	Reviewed by Haematology Reference Committee, no changes made. Review in 5 years.

The information contained in this protocol is based on the highest level of available evidence and consensus of the eviQ reference committee regarding their views of currently accepted approaches to treatment. Any clinician (medical oncologist, haematologist, radiation oncologist, medical physicist, radiation therapist, pharmacist or nurse) seeking to apply or consult this protocol is expected to use independent clinical judgement in the context of individual clinical circumstances to determine any patient's care or treatment. While eviQ endeavours to link to reliable sources that provide accurate information, eviQ and the Cancer Institute NSW do not endorse or accept responsibility for the accuracy, currency, reliability or correctness of the content of linked external information sources. Use is subject to eviQ's disclaimer available at [www.eviq.org.au](http://www.eviq.org.au)

**First approved:** 20 November 2014

**Last reviewed:** 28 April 2023

**Review due:** 30 June 2027

***The currency of this information is guaranteed only up until the date of printing, for any updates please check:***

<https://www.eviq.org.au/p/1654>

26 Nov 2023

# Patient information - Waldenstrom macroglobulinaemia - DRC (dexamethasone, rituximab, cyclophosphamide)

Patient's name:

## Your treatment

The treatment schedule below explains how the drugs for this treatment are given.


### DRC (dexamethasone, rituximab, cyclophosphamide)

This treatment cycle is repeated every 21 days. You will have up to 6 cycles. Your doctor will advise you of the number of treatments you will have.

Day	Treatment	How it is given	How long it takes
1	<b>Dexamethasone</b> ( <i>dex-a-METH-a-son</i> e)	By a drip into a vein	About 15 minutes
	<b>Rituximab</b> ( <i>ri-TUX-i-mab</i> )	By a drip into a vein	<b>1st cycle:</b> About 4 to 6 hours  <b>Cycles thereafter:</b> About 3 to 4 hours
1 to 5	<b>Cyclophosphamide</b> ( <i>SYE-kloe-FOS-fa-mide</i> )	Take orally TWICE a day, with a glass of water on days 1 to 5 only. Swallow whole, do not break or crush tablets. If you forget to take a tablet or vomit a tablet, take your normal dose the next time it is due. Do not take an extra dose.	

## When to get help

Anticancer drugs (drugs used to treat cancer) can sometimes cause serious problems. It is important to get medical help immediately if you become unwell.

 <b>IMMEDIATELY go to your nearest hospital Emergency Department, or contact your doctor or nurse if you have any of the following at any time:</b>	<b>Emergency contact details</b> Ask your doctor or nurse from your treating team who to contact if you have a problem
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a temperature of 38°C or higher</li><li>• chills, sweats, shivers or shakes</li><li>• shortness of breath</li><li>• uncontrolled vomiting or diarrhoea</li><li>• pain, tingling or discomfort in your chest or arms</li><li>• you become unwell.</li></ul>	Daytime:..... Night/weekend:..... Other instructions:..... ..... .....

**During your treatment immediately** tell the doctor or nurse looking after you if you get any of the following problems:

- leaking from the area where the drugs are being given
- pain, stinging, swelling or redness in the area where the drugs are being given or at any injection sites
- a skin rash, itching, feeling short of breath, wheezing, fever, shivers, or feeling dizzy or unwell in any way (allergic reaction).

## Other information about your treatment

### Changes to your dose or treatment delays

Sometimes a treatment may be started at a lower dose or the dose needs to be changed during treatment. There may also be times when your treatment is delayed. This can happen if your doctor thinks you are likely to have severe side effects, if you get severe side effects, if your blood counts are affected and causing delays in treatment, or if you are finding it hard to cope with the treatment. This is called a dose reduction, dose change or treatment delay. Your doctor will explain if you need any changes or delays to your treatment and the reason why.

### Blood tests and monitoring

Anti-cancer drugs can reduce the number of blood cells in your body. You will need to have regular blood tests to check that your blood cell count has returned to normal. If your blood count is low, your treatment may be delayed until it has returned to normal. Your doctor or nurse will tell you when to have these blood tests.

### Central venous access devices (CVADs)

This treatment may involve having chemotherapy through a central venous access device (CVAD). Your doctor or nurse will explain this to you. For more information, see the [eviQ patient information sheets](#) on CVADs.

### Treatment with cyclophosphamide

You should drink at least 8 to 10 glasses of fluid (unless you are fluid restricted) for 2 days after treatment with cyclophosphamide. You should also empty your bladder often.

### Medications for blood pressure

Rituximab may lower your blood pressure. Tell your doctor if you are taking any blood pressure medications. Your doctor may advise you to temporarily stop your blood pressure medications before your rituximab infusions.

### Other medications given during this treatment

- **Anti-sickness (anti-nausea) medication:** you may be given some anti-sickness medication. Make sure you take this medication as your doctor or nurse tells you, even if you don't feel sick. This can help to prevent the sickness starting.
- **Prophylaxis medication:** you may need to take some medications to prevent infection and to help prevent or reduce some of the side effects of the chemotherapy. Your doctor or nurse will tell you how and when to take these medications.
- **Rituximab premedication:** before your treatment with rituximab you will need to take some tablets called a premedication to help prevent you from having a reaction to the rituximab.

## Side effects

Cancer treatments can cause damage to normal cells in your body, which can cause side effects. Everyone gets different side effects, and some people will have more problems than others.

The table below shows some of the side effects you may get with this treatment. You are unlikely to get all of those listed and you may also get some side effects that have not been listed.

Tell your doctor or nurse about any side effects that worry you. Follow the instructions below and those given to you by your doctor or nurse.



Immediate (onset hours to days)	
Flu-like symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You may get: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a fever</li> <li>chills or sweats</li> <li>muscle and joint pain</li> <li>a cough</li> <li>headaches.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Tell your doctor or nurse if you get any of the symptoms listed above.</li> <li><b>Tell your doctor or nurse immediately, or go to the nearest hospital Emergency Department if you have a temperature of 38°C or higher.</b></li> </ul>
Allergic reaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allergic reactions are uncommon but can be life threatening.</li> <li><b>If you feel unwell during the infusion or shortly after it, or:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>get a fever, shivers or shakes</b></li> <li><b>feel dizzy, faint, confused or anxious</b></li> <li><b>start wheezing or have difficulty breathing</b></li> <li><b>have a rash, itch or redness of the face</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b><u>While you are in hospital:</u> Tell your doctor or nurse immediately.</b></p> <p><b><u>After you leave:</u> Contact your doctor or nurse immediately, or go to the nearest hospital Emergency Department.</b></p>
Nausea and vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You may feel sick (nausea) or be sick (vomit).</li> <li>Take your anti-sickness medication as directed even if you don't feel sick.</li> <li>Drink plenty of fluids (unless you are fluid restricted).</li> <li>Eat small meals more frequently.</li> <li>Try food that does not require much preparation.</li> <li>Try bland foods like dry biscuits or toast.</li> <li>Gentle exercise may help with nausea.</li> <li>Ask your doctor or nurse for eviQ patient information - <a href="#">Nausea and vomiting during cancer treatment</a>.</li> <li><b>Tell your doctor or nurse immediately, or go to the nearest hospital Emergency Department if you have uncontrolled vomiting or feel dizzy or light-headed.</b></li> </ul>
Early (onset days to weeks)	
Infection risk (neutropenia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This treatment lowers the amount of white blood cells in your body. The type of white blood cells that help to fight infection are called neutrophils. Having low level of neutrophils is called neutropenia. If you have neutropenia, you are at greater risk of getting an infection. It also means that your body can't fight infections as well as usual. This is a serious side effect, and can be life threatening.</li> <li>Wash your hands often.</li> <li>Keep a thermometer at home and take your temperature regularly, and if you feel unwell.</li> <li>Do your mouth care regularly.</li> <li>Inspect your central line site (if you have one) daily for any redness, pus or swelling.</li> <li>Limit contact with people who are sick.</li> <li>Learn how to recognise the signs of infection.</li> <li>Ask your doctor or nurse for eviQ patient information - <a href="#">Infection during cancer treatment</a>.</li> <li><b>Tell your doctor or nurse immediately, or go to the nearest hospital Emergency Department if you get any of the following signs or symptoms:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a temperature of 38°C or higher</b></li> <li><b>chills, shivers, sweats or shakes</b></li> <li><b>a sore throat or cough</b></li> <li><b>uncontrolled diarrhoea</b></li> <li><b>shortness of breath</b></li> <li><b>a fast heartbeat</b></li> <li><b>become unwell even without a temperature.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>Low platelets (thrombocytopenia)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This treatment lowers the amount of platelets in your blood. Platelets help your blood to clot. When they are low, you are at an increased risk of bleeding and bruising.</li> <li>• Try not to bruise or cut yourself.</li> <li>• Avoid contact sport or vigorous exercise.</li> <li>• Clear your nose by blowing gently.</li> <li>• Avoid constipation.</li> <li>• Brush your teeth with a soft toothbrush.</li> <li>• Don't take aspirin, ibuprofen or other similar anti-inflammatory medications unless your doctor tells you to.</li> <li>• Tell your doctor or nurse if you have any bruising or bleeding.</li> <li>• <b>Tell your doctor or nurse immediately, or go to your nearest hospital Emergency Department if you have any uncontrolled bleeding.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Constipation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You may have bowel motions (stools, poo) that are less frequent, harder, smaller, painful or difficult to pass.</li> <li>• You may also get: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ bloating, cramping or pain</li> <li>◦ a loss of appetite</li> <li>◦ nausea or vomiting.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids (unless you are fluid restricted).</li> <li>• Eat plenty of fibre-containing foods such as fruit, vegetables and bran.</li> <li>• Take laxatives as directed by your doctor.</li> <li>• Try some gentle exercise daily.</li> <li>• <b>Tell your doctor or nurse if you have not opened your bowels for more than 3 days.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Tiredness and lack of energy (fatigue)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You may feel very tired, have no energy, sleep a lot, and not be able to do normal activities or things you enjoy.</li> <li>• Do not drive or operate machinery if you are feeling tired.</li> <li>• Nap for short periods (only 1 hour at a time)</li> <li>• Prioritise your tasks to ensure the best use of your energy.</li> <li>• Eat a well balanced diet and drink plenty of fluids (unless you are fluid restricted).</li> <li>• Try some gentle exercise daily.</li> <li>• Allow your friends and family to help.</li> <li>• <b>Tell your doctor or nurse if you get any of the symptoms listed above.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Bladder irritation (haemorrhagic cystitis)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You may get: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ blood in your urine, sometimes with blood clots</li> <li>◦ pain or burning when you urinate</li> <li>◦ the urge to urinate more than normal</li> <li>◦ stomach or pelvic pain or discomfort.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• When you go home, make sure you drink plenty of fluids (unless you are fluid restricted).</li> <li>• Empty your bladder often.</li> <li>• <b>Tell your doctor or nurse as soon as possible if you notice any blood in your urine.</b></li> </ul>

<b>Mouth pain and soreness (mucositis)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You may have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>bleeding gums</li> <li>mouth ulcers</li> <li>a white coating on your tongue</li> <li>pain in the mouth or throat</li> <li>difficulty eating or swallowing.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Avoid spicy, acidic or crunchy foods and very hot or cold food and drinks.</li> <li>Try bland and soft foods.</li> <li>Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush after each meal and at bedtime. If you normally floss continue to do so.</li> <li>Rinse your mouth after you eat and brush your teeth, using either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1/4 teaspoon of salt in 1 cup of warm water, or</li> <li>1/4 teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda in 1 cup of warm water</li> </ul> </li> <li>Ask your doctor or nurse for eviQ patient information - <a href="#">Mouth problems during cancer treatment</a>.</li> <li><b>Tell your doctor or nurse if you get any of the symptoms listed above.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Side effects from steroid medication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steroid medication may cause: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mood swings and behaviour changes</li> <li>an increased appetite</li> <li>weight gain</li> <li>swelling in your hands and feet</li> <li>stomach upsets</li> <li>trouble sleeping</li> <li>fragile skin and bruising</li> <li>an increase in your blood sugar level</li> <li>weak and brittle bones (osteoporosis)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Take your steroid medication with food to reduce stomach upset</li> <li>If you have diabetes, your blood sugar levels may be tested more often.</li> <li>Tell your doctor or nurse if you get any of the symptoms listed above.</li> </ul>

Late (onset weeks to months)	
<b>Low red blood cells (anaemia)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You may feel dizzy, light-headed, tired and appear more pale than usual.</li> <li>Tell your doctor or nurse if you have any of these signs or symptoms. You might need a blood transfusion.</li> <li><b>Tell your doctor or nurse immediately, or go to the nearest hospital Emergency Department if you have any chest pain, trouble breathing, or feel like your heart is racing.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Hair loss (alopecia)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your hair may start to fall out from your head and body.</li> <li>Hair loss usually starts 2 to 3 weeks after your first treatment.</li> <li>You may become completely bald and your scalp might feel tender.</li> <li>Use a gentle shampoo and a soft brush.</li> <li>Take care with hair products like hairspray, hair dye, bleaches and perms.</li> <li>Protect your scalp from the cold with a hat, scarf or wig.</li> <li>Protect your scalp from the sun with a hat or sunscreen of SPF 50 or higher.</li> <li>Moisturise your scalp to prevent itching.</li> <li>Ask your doctor or nurse about the <a href="#">Look Good Feel Better</a> program</li> </ul>
<b>Changes in the way your brain works [progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML)]</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This treatment can affect your central nervous system. This can be very serious.</li> <li><b>Tell your doctor or nurse immediately, or go to the nearest hospital Emergency Department if you get any of the following symptoms:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>trouble with your speech or vision</b></li> <li><b>confusion or memory loss</b></li> <li><b>changes in your personality</b></li> <li><b>weakness in your arms and legs</b></li> <li><b>poor balance or coordination</b></li> <li><b>fits (seizures).</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Delayed (onset months to years)

### Lung problems

- Lung problems are rare, but can be serious. They may occur throughout treatment or after the completion of treatment.
- You may get:
  - shortness of breath
  - fever
  - dry cough
  - wheezing
  - fast heartbeat
  - chest pain.
- Your doctor will monitor how well your lungs are working during your treatment.
- **Tell your doctor or nurse immediately, or go to the nearest hospital Emergency Department if you have chest pain or become short of breath.**

## General advice for people having cancer treatment

### Chemotherapy safety

- Learn how to keep you and your family safe while you are having anticancer drugs.
- See our patient information sheet - [Chemotherapy safety at home](#).

### Blood clot risk

- Cancer and anticancer drugs can increase the risk of a blood clot (thrombosis).
- Tell your doctor if you have a family history of blood clots.
- A blood clot can cause pain, redness, swelling in your arms or legs, shortness of breath or chest pain.
- If you have any of these symptoms go to your nearest hospital Emergency Department.

### Medications and vaccinations

- Before you start treatment, tell your doctor about any medications you are taking, including vitamins or herbal supplements.
- Don't stop or start any medications during treatment without talking to your doctor and pharmacist first.
- Paracetamol is safe to take if you have a headache or other mild aches and pains. It is recommended that you avoid taking aspirin, ibuprofen and other anti-inflammatory type medications for pain while you are having treatment. However, if these medications have been prescribed by your doctor, do not stop taking them without speaking with your doctor.
- Vaccinations such as flu and tetanus vaccines are safe to receive while having treatment. Do not have any live vaccines during your treatment or for 6 months after it finishes. If you are unsure, check with your doctor before you have any vaccinations.
- People you live with should be fully vaccinated, including having live vaccines according to the current vaccination schedule. Extra care needs to be taken with hand washing and careful disposal of soiled nappies for infants who have recently received the rotavirus vaccine.

### Other medical and dental treatment

- If you go to hospital or any other medical appointment (including dental appointments), always tell the person treating you that you are receiving anticancer drugs.
- Before you have any dental treatment, talk to your doctor.

### Diet and food safety

- While you are receiving this treatment, it is important that you try to maintain a healthy diet.
- Grapefruit and grapefruit juice can interact with your medication and should be avoided while you are on this treatment.
- Speak to your doctor or nurse about whether drinking alcohol is safe with your treatment.
- If you have any concerns about recent weight loss or weight gain or questions about your diet, ask to speak to a dietitian.
- There are some foods that may cause infection in high risk individuals and should be avoided. For further information on foods to avoid and food hygiene please ask for a copy of the [Listeria and food brochure](#).

### Fertility

- Some cancer treatments can reduce your fertility. This can make it difficult or impossible to get pregnant or father a child.
- Talk to your doctor or nurse before you start any treatment. Depending on your situation there may be fertility sparing options available to you and/or your partner, discuss these with your doctor or nurse.

## Pregnancy and breastfeeding

- Some cancer treatments can be dangerous to unborn babies. Talk to your doctor or nurse if you think there is any chance that you could be pregnant.
- Do not try to get pregnant or father a child during this treatment. Contraception should be used during treatment and after stopping treatment. Ask your doctor or nurse about what type of contraception you should use.
- If you are planning pregnancy/fatherhood after completing this treatment, talk to your doctor. Some doctors advise waiting between 6 months and 2 years after treatment.
- Do not breastfeed if you are on this treatment, as anti-cancer medications can also pass into breast milk.

## Sex life and sexuality

- The desire to have sex may decrease as a result of this treatment or its side effects.
- Your emotions and the way you feel about yourself may also be affected by this treatment.
- It may help to discuss your concerns with your partner and doctor or nurse.

## Risk of developing a second cancer

- Some anticancer treatments can increase your chance of developing a second cancer, this is rare. Your doctor will discuss with you the specific risks of your treatment.

## Quitting smoking

- It is never too late to quit smoking. Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do to help your treatment work better.
- There are many effective tools to improve your chances of quitting.
- Talk to your treating team for more information and referral to a smoking cessation support service.

## Staying active

- Research shows that exercise, no matter how small, has many benefits for people during and after cancer treatment.
- Talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program. Your doctor can advise whether you need a modified exercise program.

For more information about cancer treatment, side effects and side effect management see our [Patient and carers](#) section.

## Where to get more information

### Telephone support

- Call Cancer Council on 13 11 20 for cancer information and support
- Call the Leukaemia Foundation on 1800 620 420 (Mon to Fri 9am – 5pm)
- Call the Lymphoma Nurse Support Line on 1800 953 081 (Mon to Fri 9am - 5pm)
- Call the Myeloma Australia Support Line on 1800 693 566 (Mon to Fri 9am - 5pm)

### Haematology, transplant and cellular therapy information

- Arrow bone marrow transplant foundation – [arrow.org.au](http://arrow.org.au)
- Australasian Menopause Society – [menopause.org.au](http://menopause.org.au)
- Chris O'Brien Lifehouse - Total Body Irradiation - [mylifehouse.org.au/departments/radiation-oncology/total-body-irradiation/](http://mylifehouse.org.au/departments/radiation-oncology/total-body-irradiation/)
- Healthy Male Andrology Australia – [healthymale.org.au/](http://healthymale.org.au/)
- International Myeloma Foundation – [myeloma.org](http://myeloma.org)
- Leukaemia Foundation – [leukaemia.org.au](http://leukaemia.org.au)
- Lymphoma Australia – [lymphoma.org.au](http://lymphoma.org.au)
- Myeloma Australia – [myeloma.org.au](http://myeloma.org.au)
- NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation, Blood & Marrow Transplant Network – <https://aci.health.nsw.gov.au/networks/bmtct>
- NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation - [aci.health.nsw.gov.au/projects/immune-effector-cell-service](http://aci.health.nsw.gov.au/projects/immune-effector-cell-service)
- NCCN Guidelines for Patients Immunotherapy Side Effects: CAR T-Cell Therapy - [nccn.org/patientresources/patient-resources/guidelines-for-patients](http://nccn.org/patientresources/patient-resources/guidelines-for-patients)
- Talk Blood Cancer – [cmisupport.org.uk/organisation-type/social-media-groups](http://cmisupport.org.uk/organisation-type/social-media-groups)

### General cancer information and support

- Australian Rare Cancer (ARC) Portal – [arcportal.org.au/](http://arcportal.org.au/)
- Beyondblue – [beyondblue.org.au](http://beyondblue.org.au)

