

Nivolumab subkutant var 4:e vecka

for Head and neck cancer

Regimen schedule

Day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Nivolumab	X																				

Next course of treatment, day 29

Day	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Nivolumab							

About your treatment

Nivolumab is an antibody that activates your immune system to attack the cancer cells.

Each course is 28 days. You get an injection on day 1. After that, there is a break of 27 days, before a new course starts. During treatment, your blood tests and any side effects will be monitored.

Immunotherapy

When receiving immunotherapy (antibodies that activate your immune system), there is a risk of serious side effects.

The side effects that can occur are autoimmune reactions/inflammation in the body's various organs. The side effects are often mild and transient but can become serious. It is important that the side effects are detected early so that they can be followed up and treated if necessary.

The side effects can occur at any time during treatment but also several months after treatment has ended.

Signs of side effects can also be detected through blood tests. You may provide blood tests during treatment and after treatment has ended.

It is important that you contact your clinic if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- New or changed dry cough and shortness of breath. May be a side effect in the lungs, pneumonitis
- Increased number of stools, new diarrhea possibly accompanied by stomach pain, blood in the stool or black stools. May be a side effect in the intestines, colitis
- Dark-colored urine, foamy urine or very cloudy urine. May be a side effect in the kidneys, nephritis
- Headache, unusually tiredness and weakness, impaired consciousness, pain behind the eyes, visual disturbances, confusion and new depression. May be a side effect in hormone-producing glands such as the thyroid or pituitary gland
- Redness and rash on the skin, often with itching. Wetting sores and blistering are a serious sign. May be a side effect in the skin, dermatitis
- New pain, swelling and stiffness in muscles and joints, May be myositis and arthritis
- Impaired strength and sensation in the arms and legs. May be a side effect in the nervous system, neuritis
- Chest pain, irregular pulse and palpitations. May be signs of inflammation of the heart muscle, myocarditis

Side effects - symptoms and tips

The side effects we list here are the most common and important. They can vary greatly from person to person, and even from time to time. The side effects may require a break in treatment. Tell your doctor or nurse if you have any side effects. Often the symptoms can be prevented or alleviated.

Side effects may come late, several months after treatment has ended. Contact your doctor anyway!

Fatigue

Fatigue is common. You may feel low in energy and never rested. Your memory may deteriorate, and you may find it harder to concentrate and solve problems. It can make you feel down, stressed and anxious. You may also find it difficult to socialise. Fatigue may persist for a long time after treatment.

Tips: Try to exercise and move around. It's the only thing known to help with fatigue.

Problems with stomach and intestines

Diarrhoea and nausea are common, but you may also become constipated.

You can also get inflammation of the intestines (colitis). It can cause severe diarrhoea, stomach pain, blood in your stools or dark and smelly stools.

Skin problems

Dry skin and rashes with or without itching are common. Some skin conditions can be made worse by treatment, such as psoriasis and rosacea. You may also get inflammation of the skin (dermatitis), which in rare cases can lead to a severe skin reaction with watery sores.

Tip for mild itching: When washing your skin, be gentle and use unscented soap or shower oil. Lubricate with moisturiser.

Dry cough and difficulty breathing

New symptoms of dry cough, shortness of breath and difficulty breathing may be due to a special inflammation of the lungs and airways (pneumonitis).

Pain in muscles and joints

Pain in muscles and joints is common. Swelling around the ankles is also common.

Eye problems

You may get red eyes with stinging and pain. You may also experience blurred vision, dry eyes and become more sensitive to light.

Tip: If your eyes sting and feel dry, use lubricating eye drops available from pharmacies.

Hormone changes

You may experience headaches, fatigue, depression, hot flashes, heart palpitations, decreased sexual desire and behavioural changes. You may also experience visual disturbances, such as blurred vision and double vision, and pain behind the eyes. Symptoms may be due to inflammation of the thyroid, adrenal or pituitary glands.

Sense and awareness

Your strength or sensation in your arms and legs may be reduced, but this is rare. This may be due to inflammation of the nerve pathways (peripheral neuropathy).

Consciousness may be affected in rare cases, if the inflammation affects the brain instead (encephalitis).

Contact your clinic immediately at:

Acute

- Call 112 in case of persistent acute chest pain, pressure on the chest or difficulty breathing/shortness of breath

Contact your reception immediately at:

- Fever (temp above 38 degrees) or at a temperature below 36 degrees
- Sudden deterioration regardless of symptom
- Increased number of stools/diarrhea with or without stomach pain, bloody or black stools
- New onset dry cough and shortness of breath
- Severe itching, blisters, oozing sores and peeling skin.
- If you or your relatives feel that you are changed, confused or that consciousness is affected.
- Headache, unusual fatigue, pain behind the eyes and visual disturbances.
- Dark foamy urine or very cloudy urine.
- Severe muscle or joint pain or an effect on strength or feeling in the arms and legs
- Yellow skin color

Contact your clinic before vaccination

If you need to be vaccinated, talk to your doctor or nurse beforehand.

Common advice

It is important not to get pregnant or make someone pregnant while you are being treated with cancer drugs, as the drugs can affect the foetus. Therefore, use safe contraceptives. Sometimes double protection is needed, as side effects such as diarrhoea or the direct effect of cancer drugs may mean that the contraceptive pill is not enough protection on its own.

General information about cancer

Useful information about cancer is available from both 1177 Vårdguiden and Cancerfonden:

www.1177.se

www.cancerfonden.se

Notes
