Pembrolizumab-Pemetrexed

for Lungcancer

Regimen schedule

Next course of treatment, day 22

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

About your treatment

Pembrolizumab is an antibody that activates your immune system to attack cancer cells. Pemetrexed is a cytostatic drug.

Each course is 21 days. You get an IV on day 1. There is then a break of 20 days before a new course of treatment starts. During treatment, your blood tests and any side effects will be monitored.

Side effects - symptoms and tips

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. Side effects may determine your dose or require to stop taking the medicine. Tell your doctor or nurse if you have any side effects. Often the symptoms can be prevented or alleviated.

Medicines for inflammation and pain. To reduce the risk of side effects, avoid NSAID's for two days before and two days after the day of treatment. These includes Magnecyl (acetylsalicylic acid), Voltaren (diclofenac) and Ipen (buprofen). For pain relief, you can use, for example, Alvedon (paracetamol).

Vitamin supplements To reduce the risk of side effects, you should take tablets containing folic acid every day throughout the treatment period and 3 weeks after the last day of treatment. You will also receive a shot of vitamin B12 before treatment starts and regularly during treatment. **Side effects may come late, several months after treatment has ended. Contact your doctor anyway!**

Fatigue

Fatigue is common in connection with cancer and its treatment. The severity of the symptoms and their duration vary from person to person. You may continue to feel tired long after treatment has ended. This type of extreme exhaustion is known as fatigue—a tiredness that does not always improve with rest or sleep. Many describe fatigue as a total lack of energy, and it can occur even without physical exertion. Your ability to remember, concentrate, and solve problems may be impaired. Fatigue is sometimes associated with feelings of resignation, stress, anxiety, and depression. Tip: Try to stay active. Physical activity often helps alleviate tiredness and fatigue. Find a balance between activity, rest, and sleep that works for you.

Nausea and taste changes

You may feel unwell from the treatment. You will therefore be given anti-nausea medication in conjunction with the treatment. The medicines may cause constipation. You can get different varieties depending on how you feel. The taste of food and drink may be altered by the treatment.

Tips: Sometimes it feels better to eat lighter food and small portions. For example, try skim milk, yoghurt, omelettes, sandwiches and hot or cold soups. Drinking a little extra between meals can reduce nausea.

Problems with mouth and mucous membranes

The mucous membranes of your nose, mouth, eyes and abdomen may be affected by your treatment. For example, you may have nosebleeds and a runny nose. In the mouth, you may experience dryness, redness, burning and sores. You can also get fungus, which turns the lining of your mouth red or gives it a white coating. Eyes may become dry and watery. The mucous membranes in the lower abdomen can also become dry.

Tip: If you have a dry mouth, use saliva stimulants available in pharmacies. Rinsing your mouth with Vichy water can prevent fungus. Be attentive to oral hygiene, and use a soft toothbrush and mild toothpaste. Be careful with floss and toothpicks. Inform your dentist of your cancer treatment when you visit. Avoid contact lenses if you have eye problems. Women can use oestrogen cream, emollient cream or oil to treat dry mucous membranes in the lower abdomen.

Infection susceptibility

You will be susceptible to infection after treatment. This is because the level of white blood cells drops. Before each treatment, blood samples are taken to see if the blood cells have recovered. If the values are too low, the treatment must be postponed.

Tips: Try to avoid close contact with people who have a cold or stomach illness, for example. Wash your hands often with soap and water. Hand sanitizer can be useful.

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.

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