ABVD

for Haematological malignancy

Regimen schedule

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

Next course of treatment, day 29

Day	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Doxorubicin							
Bleomycin							
Vinblastin							
Dakarbazin							

About your treatment

Bleomycin, dakarbazine, doxorubicin and vinblastine are cytostatic drugs.

Each course is 28 days. On days 1 and 15, you will be given an IV. After that, there is a break of 13 days, before a new course starts. During treatment, your blood tests and any side effects will be monitored

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 you to stop taking the medicine.

Tell your doctor or nurse if you have any side effects. Often the symptoms can be prevented or alleviated.

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 stomach and intestines

Constipation is common. You may also get diarrhoea.

Tip: Drink a lot, a few glasses more than usual per day. If you're constipated, try high-fibre foods and exercise. If you have diarrhoea, avoid fatty, spicy and high-fibre foods. Talk to your doctor if you get diarrhoea or constipation - you may need medication.

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.

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.

Hair loss

Usually you will lose your hair 2-4 weeks after the first treatment. The hair will start to grow back about 3-4 weeks after you have finished all the cytostatic treatment. Sometimes the hair colour changes, and straight hair can become curly. But over time, the hair usually returns to its former state. Sometimes, you may even lose eyebrows and eyelashes, but they also grow back.

Numbness and tingling - sensory disturbances

You may experience numbness and tingling in your hands and feet, and your fine motor skills may become worse. For example, you may have difficulty buttoning buttons or walking. The symptoms usually go away, but not completely in everyone. Tell your doctor or nurse if you have numbness or tingling in your hands and feet. Physical activity can prevent neuropathy and can relieve symptoms and improve motor skills and balance. Try to find the exercise that suits you. Cardio and strength training can be good for preventive purposes. If neuropathy has occurred, improved muscle strength, balance training and yoga can also have an effect by affecting function for the better.

Cough and shortness of breath

You may experience coughing and shortness of breath. Tell your doctor or nurse if you have trouble breathing.

Urine

The urine may turn red after the first day of treatment.

Contact your clinic immediately at:

- fever above 38 degrees, or temperature below 36 degrees
- severe diarrhoea, or diarrhoea combined with fever
- chest pain or difficulty breathing
- nosebleeds or other bleeding that you can’t stop
- skin rash on most of the body, or skin rash with pain
- sudden deterioration, regardless of symptoms
- chest pain or difficulty breathing, call 112

Common advice

Cancer drugs are usually excreted in the urine up to 7 days after treatment. Therefore, you should avoid splashing urine. Sit down when you pee. When finished, close the toilet lid and flush 2 times. 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. If you are a man, use a condom during sexual intercourse within 72 hours of treatment, as cytostatic drugs are also excreted through the seminal fluid.

General information about cancer

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

www.1177.se

www.cancerfonden.se