

INTRAVENOUS CANCER TREATMENT EDUCATION



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CETUXIMAB

Name of the regimen and cancer drugs

Cetuximab (seh-TUK-sih-mab): Erbitux

Common uses

Cetuximab is most commonly used to treat head and neck cancer and for patients that have KRAS wild-type colorectal cancer, but may be used for other treatments

Treatment schedule

Your treatment will be given into your vein through an intravenous (IV) line. This may be into a short, flexible temporary catheter in your arm, or through a central venous catheter. A central venous catheter, or central line is a long, flexible IV tube that empties into a very large vein next to the heart. Talk with your care team to see which will be best for you and your treatment.

Each cetuximab treatment is repeated every 7 days. This is known as one cycle. Your treatment may be given for a set number of cycles, or it will keep going until the drug stops working or you have side effects which stop you from continuing treatment.

- Cetuximab IV is given weekly.

Drug	DAY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Cetuximab																

Other medications

Other medications may be ordered for you to prevent or treat certain side effects. These include:

	Instructions:
Medications to prevent side effects	<p>You will receive your medications to prevent side effects just before your chemotherapy. You may get prescriptions for other medications to take at home, as below:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Possible drug interactions

- Cetuximab may interact with other drugs you are taking. Please inform your care providers of all prescription medicine, over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and herbal products that you take.
- Talk with your care provider or pharmacist before taking new medications, supplements, or receiving any vaccines.

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Common Side Effects

Common side effects that have been known to happen in patients receiving cetuximab are listed in the left side of this table. In some instances, the side effects may be reported less often but are still important to discuss. This table does not list all the known side effects for this therapy, only the ones that are experienced most often. Not every patient experiences every known side effect of a drug; even if you are taking the same drug as another patient, you may experience different side effects. Options to help manage any side effects that do occur are included on the right side of this table. These should be discussed with your care provider. If you experience any side effect you cannot manage or that is not listed here, contact your care provider.

Possible Side Effect	Management
Rash or itchy skin	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep your skin moisturized with creams and moisturizing lotions to decrease the risk of rash or itchiness and wear loose fitting clothing.• Avoid using perfumes and cologne as these products may increase rash symptoms.• Avoid being in the heat for long periods of time.• Your provider may recommend an over-the-counter antihistamine or a topical cream.• Sunlight can make symptoms worse• Avoid sun exposure as much as possible to decrease the risk of sunburn. The highest exposure to UV (ultra-violet) radiation occurs between the hours of 10am and 4pm.• Wear long-sleeved clothing, with UV protection if possible.• Wear broad-brimmed hats.• Apply broad-spectrum sunscreen (UVA/UVB) with at least SPF 30 as often as directed on the bottle.• Use lip balm with at least SPF 30 <p>If your rash or itching continues to worsen, contact your care team.</p>

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Possible Side Effect	Management
<p>Acne-like rash</p>	<p>A rash that looks like acne may happen on your face, chest, and upper back while taking this medication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your doctor may prescribe medication to help prevent or manage the rash • If you do get a rash, keep the area around the rash clean and dry • Check with your care team before using anything to treat it. • Do not use over-the-counter acne treatments such as benzoyl peroxide or salicylic acid and soaps containing alcohol • Wash with a mild, moisturizing soap. Avoid long, hot baths or showers • After washing, pat skin dry. Avoid vigorous rubbing • Oatmeal baths and unscented moisturizers may help with itching • Sunlight can make symptoms worse: • Avoid sun exposure as much as possible to decrease the risk of sunburn. The highest exposure to UV (ultra-violet) radiation occurs between the hours of 10am and 4pm. • Wear long-sleeved clothing, with UV protection if possible. • Wear broad-brimmed hats. • Apply broad-spectrum sunscreen (UVA/UVB) with at least SPF 30 as often as directed on the bottle. • Use lip balm with at least SPF 30 • Avoid tanning beds
<p>Fatigue</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may be more tired than usual or have less energy. • Stay as active as possible, but know it is okay to rest as needed. • Try to do some type of moderate activity every day. • Conserve your energy. Plan your activities and do them at a time of day when you feel a bit more energetic. • Follow a healthy diet and stay hydrated. • Accept help from family and friends • Find healthy ways to manage stress, such as meditation, journaling, yoga, and guided imagery • Develop good sleeping habits, limit napping during the day to help you sleep better at night. • Avoid operating heavy machinery if you feel too tired. <p>Contact your care team if you experience extreme fatigue that prevents you from doing your normal daily activities.</p>

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Rare but serious side effects

Tell your care provider if you experience any symptoms of these problems:

- Infusion reactions: cetuximab can rarely cause an infusion reaction. During your treatment, let the nurse know right away if any of these symptoms happen: chills or shaking, dizziness, fever, itchiness or rash, flushing, difficulty breathing, wheezing, sudden back pain, or feeling faint.
- Cardiac arrest: cetuximab can cause your heart to stop beating effectively. Seek medical attention right away if you begin feeling chest pain, shortness of breath, weakness, dizziness or light headedness, or heart palpitations.
- Pulmonary toxicity: Cetuximab may result in serious and fatal lung toxicity. If you start to experience shortness of breath, fatigue, breathlessness, or discomfort/worsening of symptoms while lying on your back, please immediately contact your care team.

If you experience ANY new, worsening, or uncontrolled side effects, call your care team immediately.

(INSTITUTIONAL CONTACT INFO)

Handling body fluids and waste

Some of the drugs you receive may be present in urine, stool, sweat, or vomit for many days after treatment. Many cancer drugs are toxic, your bodily waste may also be toxic and can be dangerous to come into contact with. Once you have started cetuximab, follow the instructions below for at least two days after your treatment. This is to keep you, your loved ones, and the environment as safe as possible.

- Pregnant women should avoid touching anything that may be soiled with body fluids from the patient.
- Toilet and septic systems
 - You may use the same toilet, septic tank, and/or sewer that you usually use. If you have a low-flow toilet, close the lid and flush twice to ensure that all waste has been discarded.
- If the toilet or toilet seat becomes soiled with urine, stool, or vomit, clean the surface after every use before other people use the toilet.
- Wash hands with soap and water after using the toilet for at least 20 seconds.
- If you need a bedpan, be sure your caregiver knows to wear gloves to assist with cleanup and to wash the bedpan with soap and water every day.
- If you do not have good control of bladder or bowels, use a disposable pad with a plastic back, a diaper, or a sheet to absorb body waste.
- Wash any skin that has been exposed to body waste with soap and water.
- Linens or clothing that are soiled with body fluids or body waste should be washed separately from other linens and clothing. If you do not have a washer, place the soiled linens in a plastic bag until they can be washed.
- Wash hands with soap and water after touching linens or clothing that may be soiled with body fluids.

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Intimacy, sexual activity, contraception, and fertility

This treatment may cause changes that can affect intimacy and sexuality, including desire and body image. Maintaining physical closeness and/or intimacy with loved ones can be continued during treatment. Holding hands, hugging, and kissing can be done safely. It is recommended that you talk to your care team about any restrictions or questions you may have.

Some treatments can influence the ability to have children, also known as fertility. If you're interested in preserving fertility, talk to your care team before treatment. Ask your healthcare provider to determine when it is safe to become pregnant after your treatment. Patients of reproductive ability should not become pregnant or get their partners pregnant while receiving cetuximab. Some of the drugs you receive may be present in semen and vaginal secretion for many days after treatment. You should use barrier devices, such as condoms, during sexual activity to limit exposure to body fluids.

- Talk to your care team about birth control. Not all options may be right for your treatment or cancer. Effective contraception could include one or more of the following: barrier methods (e.g. condoms), hormone methods (e.g. birth control pills), or surgery.
- Tell your care team if you become pregnant or plan to breastfeed.

Additional resources

Product website: <https://www.erbitux.com/>

Prescribing information link: https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/label/2019/125084s273lbl.pdf

Additional instructions

Updated – July 19, 2021

Important notice: The Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC), Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association (HOPA), National Community Oncology Dispensing Association, Inc. (NCODA), and Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) have collaborated in gathering information for and developing this patient education guide. This guide represents a brief summary of the therapy derived from information provided by the drug manufacturer and other resources. This guide does not cover all existing information related to the possible uses, directions, doses, precautions, warnings, interactions, adverse effects, or risks associated with this therapy and should not substitute for the advice of a qualified healthcare professional. Provision of this guide is for informational purposes only and does not constitute or imply endorsement, recommendation, or favoring of this therapy by ACCC, HOPA, NCODA, or ONS, who assume no liability for and cannot ensure the accuracy of the information presented. The collaborators are not making any representations with respect to the medications whatsoever, and any and all decisions, with respect to such medications, are at the sole risk of the individual receiving therapy. All decisions related to receiving this therapy should be made with the guidance and under the direction of a qualified healthcare professional.

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