

Medication Information Sheet

oxaliplatin (ox-AL-ih-plah-tin)

This document provides general information about your medication. It does not replace the advice of your health care professional. Always discuss your therapy with your health care professional and refer to the package insert for more details.

Other Name: Eloxatin®

Appearance: clear, colourless solution mixed into larger bags of fluids

What is this medication for?

- For treating certain types of cancers such as colorectal, pancreatic and stomach cancer, usually in combination with other drugs (such as 5-fluorouracil). It may also be used to treat other types of cancers.

What should I do before I have this medication?

- Tell your health care team if you have or had significant medical condition(s), especially if you have / had:
 - ◊ kidney, lung or heart problems
 - ◊ numbness, tingling, pain or a burning feeling in your fingers and toes, or
 - ◊ any allergies, especially to platinum agents.

Remember to:

- Tell your health care team about all of the other medications you are taking.
- Keep taking other medications that have been prescribed for you, unless you have been told not to by your health care team.

You will have a blood test to check for hepatitis B before starting treatment. See the [Hepatitis B and Cancer Medications](#) pamphlet for more information.

How will this medication affect sex, pregnancy and breastfeeding?

Talk to your health care team about:

- How this medication may affect your sexual health.
- How this medication may affect your ability to have a baby, if this applies to you.

This medication may harm an unborn baby. Tell your health care team if you or your partner are pregnant, become pregnant during treatment, or are breastfeeding.

- If there is **any** chance you may become pregnant, you and your partner together must use **2 effective forms of birth control** at the same time until at least **9 months** after your last dose. Talk to your health care team about which birth control options are best for you.
- If you are a patient that can get somebody pregnant, you and your partner together must use **2 effective forms of birth control** at the same time until at least **6 months** after your last dose. Talk to your health care team about which birth control options are best for you.
- Do not breastfeed while on this medication and for **3 months** after your last dose.

How is this medication given?

- This drug is given through an IV (injected into a vein).
- Talk to your health care team about your treatment schedule.
- If you miss an appointment to receive your oxaliplatin, contact your health care team to find out what to do.
- You may be given this treatment along with other medications to help prevent side effects.

What else do I need to know while on this medication?

- This medication can interact with other medications and can result in the treatment not working as well or cause severe side effects.
- Make sure your health care team knows about all your medications (prescription, over-the-counter, herbals and supplements). Check with your health care team before starting or stopping any of them.
- **For mild aches and pain or fever:**
 - If you feel unwell, take your temperature before taking any medications for pain or fever. They may hide a fever.

- You may take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) tablets. Ask your health care team about the right dose for you.
- Ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®), naproxen (Aleve®) or aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid, ASA), including low dose aspirin for heart conditions, may increase your chance of bleeding. Talk to your health care team before you start or stop these medications.
- **Talk to your health care team or go to the closest emergency room right away if you have a fever.** See the [Fever](#) pamphlet for more information.
- Drinking alcohol and smoking during your treatment may increase some side effects and make your medication less effective. Speak to your health care team about smoking and drinking alcohol while on treatment.

This treatment causes cold sensitivity.

- Oxaliplatin can cause an unusual side effect where different parts of your body may become very **sensitive to cold**. This can cause discomfort from things such as cold food, cold drinks and cool or cold temperatures.

How does the cold sensitivity feel?

You may feel:

- Numbness or tingling in your fingers and toes. Sometimes it can be painful and feel like burning, which may be severe.
- Tightness in your throat or jaw.
- Like it is hard to swallow.
- Like it is hard to breathe, or that you have pressure on your chest.

Tightness in your throat will usually go away after a few hours. If it lasts longer, or if you have trouble breathing, contact your health care team or get emergency help right away.

How can I help prevent sensitivity to cold?

- Avoid the cold as much as possible.
- If you must go outside in the cold, protect your face and mouth with a scarf or high-neck sweater, wear mittens and warm socks.
- Only eat and drink things that are room temperature or warmer. Do not drink cold drinks or put ice cubes in anything you drink. Do not eat cold foods, such as ice cream.
- Avoid direct exposure to air conditioning, such as in your car.
- Take shallow breaths when you are exposed to cold air (such as from a freezer or when you are outside in winter).
- Wear gloves if you need to touch cold objects, such as items in the freezer.
- Do not use an ice pack on any part of your body.

What are the side effects of this medication?

The following side effects have been seen in people using oxaliplatin with other chemotherapy drugs (for example, fluorouracil), some of these effects may also be related to any of these medications.

You may not have all of the side effects below. You may have side effects that are not listed.

| Side effects and what to do | When to contact doctor? |
|---|--|
| Very common Side Effects (in 50 or more out of 100 people) | |
| <p>Neuropathy (Tingling, numb toes or fingers)</p> <p>(May be severe)</p> <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbness or tingling of your fingers and toes may happen after starting oxaliplatin. • Sometimes it can be painful and feel like a burning sensation, which may be severe. <p>What to do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to your health care team if you have symptoms of neuropathy. • Numbness may slowly get better after your treatment ends. • Avoid exposure to cold as it can trigger this side effect. • Do not use ice packs on your body. • Dress warmly and cover all of your skin if you must go outside in cold temperatures. • Wear gloves to touch cold objects. • Avoid breathing deeply when exposed to cold air. <p>For some people, symptoms of neuropathy may continue long after treatment ends. The sensations in the throat usually go away after a few hours; if they last longer, or if you have trouble breathing, contact your doctor right away.</p> <p>If you continue to have bothersome symptoms, talk to your health care team for advice.</p> | <p>Talk to your health care team, especially if you have trouble doing tasks like buttons writing, moving, or if you have severe pain or numbness</p> |

| Side effects and what to do | When to contact doctor? |
|---|--|
| Very common Side Effects (in 50 or more out of 100 people) | |
| <p>Low neutrophils (white blood cells) in the blood (neutropenia)</p> <p>When neutrophils are low, you are at risk of getting an infection more easily. Ask your health care team for the Neutropenia (Low white blood cell count) pamphlet for more information.</p> <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you feel hot or unwell (for example if you have chills or a new cough), you must check your temperature to see if you have a fever. • Do not take medications that treat a fever before you take your temperature (for example, Tylenol®, acetaminophen, Advil® or ibuprofen). • Do not eat or drink anything hot or cold right before taking your temperature. <p>You have a fever if your temperature taken in your mouth (oral temperature) is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 38.3°C (100.9°F) or higher at any time <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 38.0°C (100.4°F) or higher for at least one hour. <p>What to do?</p> <p>If your health care team has told you that you have low neutrophils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash your hands often to prevent infection. • Check with your health care team before getting any vaccines, surgeries, medical procedures or visiting your dentist. • Keep a digital thermometer at home so you can easily check for a fever. <p>If you have a fever:</p> <p>If you have a fever, try to contact your health care team. If you are unable to talk to the team for advice, you must get emergency medical help right away.</p> | <p>If you have a fever, try to contact your health care team. If you are unable to talk to the team for advice, you MUST get emergency medical help right away</p> |

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| Very common Side Effects (in 50 or more out of 100 people) | |
| <p>Low platelets in the blood</p> <p>When platelets are low you are at risk for bleeding and bruising. Ask your health care team for the Low Platelet Count pamphlet for more information.</p> <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch for signs of bleeding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ bleeding from your gums ◦ unusual or heavy nosebleeds ◦ bruising easily or more than normal ◦ black coloured stools (poo) or blood in your stools (poo) ◦ coughing up red or brown coloured mucus ◦ dizziness, constant headache or changes in your vision ◦ heavy vaginal bleeding ◦ red or pink coloured urine (pee) <p>What to do?</p> <p>If your health care team has told you that you have low platelets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell your pharmacist that your platelet count may be low before taking any prescriptions or over-the-counter medication. • Check with your healthcare team before you go to the dentist. • Try to prevent cuts and bruises. • Ask your health care team what activities are safe for you. • Your treatment may need to be delayed if you have low platelets. Your health care team may recommend a blood transfusion. <p>If you have signs of bleeding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have a small bleed, clean the area with soap and water or a saline (saltwater) rinse. Apply pressure for at least 10 minutes. <p>If you have bleeding that doesn't stop or is severe (very heavy), you must get emergency medical help right away.</p> | <p>Talk to your health care team if you have any signs of bleeding. If you have bleeding that doesn't stop or is severe (very heavy), you MUST get emergency medical help right away</p> |

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| Very common Side Effects (in 50 or more out of 100 people) | |
| <p>Nausea and vomiting</p> <p>May occur in hours to days after your treatment.</p> <p>If you have nausea or vomiting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take anti-nausea medication(s) as prescribed to you by your doctor. • Drink clear liquids and have small meals. Get fresh air and rest. • Do not eat spicy, fried foods or foods with a strong smell. • Limit caffeine (e.g. coffee, tea) and alcohol. • Contact your health care team if the prescribed anti-nausea medications are not helping to control your nausea and vomiting. <p>Also see Nausea & Vomiting pamphlet for more information.</p> | <p>Talk to your healthcare team if nausea lasts more than 48 hours or vomiting lasts more than 24 hours</p> |
| <p>Abnormal liver lab tests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your doctor will monitor these regularly. Call your doctor if you have yellowish skin or eyes, or unusual dark urine. | <p>Talk to your health care team if it does not improve or if it is severe</p> |
| <p>Diarrhea</p> <p>May happen days to weeks after you get your treatment.</p> <p>If you have diarrhea :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take anti-diarrhea medication if your health care team prescribed it. • Avoid foods or drinks with artificial sweetener (e.g. chewing gum, “diet” drinks), coffee and alcohol. • Eat many small meals and snacks instead of 2 or 3 large meals. • Drink at least 6 to 8 cups of liquids each day. Talk to your health care team if you can’t drink 6-8 cups of liquids each day when you have diarrhea. You may need special liquids with salt and sugar, called Oral Rehydration Therapy. <p>See the Diarrhea pamphlet for more information.</p> | <p>Talk to your health care team if it does not improve or if it is severe</p> |

| Side effects and what to do | When to contact doctor? |
|---|--|
| Common Side Effects (in 25 to 49 out of 100 people) | |
| <p>Fatigue (Tiredness)</p> <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeling of tiredness or low energy that lasts a long time and does not go away with rest or sleep. <p>What to do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be active. Aim to get 30 minutes of moderate exercise (you are able to talk comfortably while exercising) on most days. Check with your health care team before starting any new exercise. Pace yourself, do not rush. Put off less important activities. Rest when you need to. Ask family or friends to help you with things like housework, shopping, and child or pet care. Eat well and drink at least 6 to 8 glasses of water or other liquids every day (unless your health care team has told you to drink more or less). Avoid driving or using machinery if you are feeling tired. <p>Ask your health care team for the Fatigue pamphlet for more information.</p> | <p>Talk to your health care team if it does not improve or if it is severe</p> |
| <p>Mouth sores</p> <p>You may have round, painful, white or gray sores inside your mouth. They can occur on the tongue, lips, gums, or inside your cheeks. In more severe cases they may make it hard to swallow, eat or to brush your teeth. They usually last 1 to 2 weeks.</p> <p>To help prevent mouth sores:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take care of your mouth by gently brushing and flossing regularly. Rinse your mouth often. Do not use mouthwashes with alcohol. Instead, try a homemade mouthwash: Mix 1 teaspoonful of baking soda and 1 teaspoonful of salt in 4 cups (1L) of water. <p>If you have mouth sores:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check with your health care team as soon as you notice mouth or lip sores or if it hurts to swallow. Avoid hot, spicy, acidic, hard or crunchy foods. Your doctor may prescribe a mouthwash to relieve mouth sores and prevent infection. <p>See the Mouth Care pamphlet for more information.</p> | <p>Talk to your health care team as soon as possible</p> |

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| Common Side Effects (in 25 to 49 out of 100 people) | |
| <p>Sensation that you are not breathing properly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This can be caused by drinking cold fluids or inhaling cold air. <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trouble swallowing or talking. • Tightness in your jaw. • Unusual feelings in your tongue. • Feeling like it is hard to breathe or pressure in your chest. <p>What to do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid the cold as much as possible. • If you must go outside in the cold, protect your face and mouth with a scarf or high-neck sweater. • Only eat and drink things that are room temperature or warmer. Do not drink cold drinks or put ice cubes in anything you drink. Do not eat cold foods, such as ice cream. • Avoid direct exposure to air conditioning, such as in your car. • Take shallow breaths when you are exposed to cold air (such as from a freezer or when you are outside in winter). • Do not use an ice pack on any part of your body. <p>Problems with breathing and swallowing can be unpleasant. They should only last a few minutes.</p> <p>If they do not go away quickly or if you also feel chest pain, speak with your health care team as soon as possible. If severe, get emergency medical help right away.</p> | <p>Contact your health care team if it does not improve. Get emergency medical help if it is severe.</p> |
| <p>Hair thinning or loss</p> <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your hair may become thin or fall out during or after treatment. • In most cases, your hair will grow back after treatment. The texture or colour may change. • In very rare cases, hair loss may be permanent. | <p>Talk to your health care team if this bothers you</p> |

| Side effects and what to do | When to contact doctor? |
|--|-------------------------|
| Common Side Effects (in 25 to 49 out of 100 people) | |
| What to do? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a gentle soft brush. • Do not use hair sprays, bleaches, dyes and perms. | |

| Side effects and what to do | When to contact doctor? |
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| Less Common Side Effects (in 10 to 24 out of 100 people) | |
| Constipation <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having bowel movements (going poo) less often than normal. • Small hard stools (poo) that look like pellets. • The need to push hard and strain to have any stool (poo) come out. • Stomach ache or cramps. • A bloated belly, feeling of fullness, or discomfort. • Leaking of watery stools (poo). • Lots of gas or burping. • Nausea or vomiting. <p>What to do?</p> <p>To help prevent constipation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to eat more fiber rich foods like fruits with skin, leafy greens and whole grains. • Drink at least 6 to 8 cups of liquids each day unless your health care team has told you to drink more or less. • Be Active. Exercise can help to keep you regular. • If you take opioid pain medication, ask your health care team if eating more fibre is right for you. <p>To help treat constipation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have not had a bowel movement in 2 to 3 days you may need to take a laxative (medication to help you poo) to help you have regular bowel movements. Ask your health care team what to do. <p>Ask your health care team for the Constipation Pamphlet for more information.</p> | <p>Talk to your health care team if it does not improve or if it is severe</p> |

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| Less Common Side Effects (in 10 to 24 out of 100 people) | |
| <p>Pains or cramps in the belly</p> <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pain or cramps in your belly. • Constipation and diarrhea can cause pain in your belly. <p>What to do?</p> <p>If the pain is severe, gets worse or doesn't go away, talk to your health care team about other possible causes.</p> | Talk to your health care team if it does not improve or if it is severe |
| <p>Mild swelling in arms and legs; puffiness</p> <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may have mild swelling or puffiness in your arms and/or legs. Rarely, this may be severe. <p>What to do?</p> <p>To help prevent swelling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat a low-salt diet. <p>If you have swelling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear loose-fitting clothing. • For swollen legs or feet, keep your feet up when sitting. | Talk to your health care team if it does not improve or if it is severe |
| <p>Rash</p> <p>Rash may be severe in some rare cases and cause your skin to blister or peel. If this happens, get emergency medical help right away.</p> <p>To prevent and treat dry skin,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use skin moisturizer. • Protect your skin from the sun and the cold. • Use sunscreen with UVA and UVB protection and a SPF of at least 30. | Talk to your health care team if it does not improve or if it is severe |

| Side effects and what to do | When to contact doctor? |
|---|---|
| Less Common Side Effects (in 10 to 24 out of 100 people) | |
| High blood sugar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may feel thirsty and pee more often. Your doctor may check your blood sugar level. You may be advised to change your diet or take medication to treat high blood sugar. Check your blood sugar regularly if you have diabetes. | Talk to your health care team if it does not improve or if it is severe |
| Mild joint, muscle pain or cramps <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New pain in your muscles or joints, muscle cramps, or feeling achy. <p>What to do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take pain medication (acetaminophen or opioids such as codeine, morphine, hydromorphone, oxycodone) as prescribed. Read the above section “What should I do if I feel unwell, have pain, a headache or a fever?” before taking acetaminophen (Tylenol®), ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®), naproxen (Aleve®) or Aspirin. These medications may hide an infection that needs treatment or they may increase your risk of bleeding. Rest often and try light exercise (such as walking) as it may help. <p>Ask your health care team for the Pain pamphlet for more information</p> | Talk to your health care team if it does not improve or if it is severe |
| Low Appetite, weight changes <p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of interest in food or not feeling hungry. Weight change. <p>What to do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try to eat your favourite foods. Eat small meals throughout the day. You may need to take meal supplements to help keep your weight up. Talk to your health care team if you have no appetite. <p>Ask your health care team for the loss of appetite pamphlet for more information.</p> | Talk to your health care team if it does not improve or if it is severe |

| Side effects and what to do | When to contact doctor? |
|--|---|
| Less Common Side Effects (in 10 to 24 out of 100 people) | |
| Taste changes What to look for? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food and drinks may taste different than usual. What to do? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eat foods that are easy to chew, such as scrambled eggs, pasta, soups, cooked vegetables. Taste foods at different temperatures, since the flavour may change. Try different forms of foods, like fresh, frozen or canned. Experiment with non-spicy foods, spices and seasonings. | Talk to your health care team if it does not improve or if it is severe |
| Pain, burning, redness, or swelling on skin where drug was injected Let your health care team know right away when this happens , since this drug can irritate tissues if it leaks from the vein during injection. | Let your health care team know right away |
| Salt imbalances It may cause muscle twitching, severe weakness or cramping, confusion and irregular heartbeat. | Get emergency medical help right away |
| Allergic reaction What to look for? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fever, itchiness, rash, swollen lips, face or tongue, chest and throat tightness. It may happen during or shortly after your treatment is given to you and may be severe. What to do? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell your nurse right away if you feel any signs of allergic reaction during or just after your treatment. Talk to your health care team for advice if you have a mild skin reaction. | Get emergency medical help right away for severe symptoms |

Other rare, but serious side effects are possible.

If you experience ANY of the following, speak to your cancer health care provider or get emergency medical help right away:

- redness, irritation, pain, tearing, blurred or double vision or other unusual changes with your sight, including vision loss
- ringing in the ears or hearing loss
- weakness in the muscles of your face, drooling, slurring speech
- lower back pain, body swelling, passing little or no urine, or recent unusual weight gain
- severe belly pain, bloating, severe constipation
- irregular heartbeat, shortness of breath, chest pain, fainting spells or swelling in your legs, ankles and belly.
- increasing cough, breathing problems, coughing up blood.
- black stools (poo), blood in your urine (pee) or stools (poo), or bleeding that does not stop.
- swelling and hardening of a vein in your arms or legs.
- trouble seeing, speaking, or using your arms or legs.
- easy or excessive bruising, pinpoint-sized reddish-purple spots on skin, usually on the lower legs
- pale skin and/or severe tiredness
- pain, thinning, reddening, tingling, numbness and peeling of the skin on your palms or the soles of your feet.
- yellowing of the eyes or skin or tenderness (hurts to touch) under the ribs on the right side of the body
- severe muscle pain or weakness, dark or red-brown urine
- severe headache, loss of consciousness, seizures, confusion, vision loss

Who do I contact if I have questions or need help?

My cancer health care provider is: _____

During the day I should contact: _____

Evenings, weekends and holidays: _____

Other Notes:

October 2023 Updated " How will this medication affect sex, pregnancy and breastfeeding" section

For more links on how to manage your symptoms go to www.cancercareontario.ca/symptoms.

The information set out in the medication information sheets, regimen information sheets, and symptom management information (for patients) contained in the Drug Formulary (the "Formulary") is intended to be used by health professionals and patients for informational purposes only. The information is not intended to cover all possible uses, directions, precautions, drug interactions or side effects of a certain drug, nor should it be used to indicate that use of a particular drug is safe, appropriate or effective for a given condition.

A patient should always consult a healthcare provider if he/she has any questions regarding the information set out in the Formulary. The information in the Formulary is not intended to act as or replace medical advice and should not be relied upon in any such regard. All uses of the Formulary are subject to clinical judgment and actual prescribing patterns may not follow the information provided in the Formulary.