

CHEMOTHERAPY REGIMEN: TAXOTERE & CYTOXAN (TC)

New Chemotherapy Information

Dr. _____, MD

This guide will help you understand your new chemotherapy treatment called TC.

It has four sections:

1. What is TC? What will my treatment look like?
2. What do I need to know before starting treatment?
3. What are the possible side effects?
4. How will chemotherapy impact other parts of my health?

Section 1: What is TC? What will my treatment look like?

TC is a type of chemotherapy given through an IV (a tube in your vein).

It includes 2 medicines:

- **Docetaxel (Taxotere)**
- **Cyclophosphamide (Cytoxan)**

What should I expect the day of chemotherapy?

- You will get your IV chemotherapy in the treatment room.
- Often, we give TC every 3 weeks for 4 cycles. Your doctor will decide how many cycles you need.
- You don't need to stay overnight.
- You will have lab tests before each treatment.
- You will see the doctor before getting chemotherapy. They will make sure you are well enough for treatment.
- You can have a light meal before treatment. Eating won't change your lab results.
- We have snacks for you in the treatment room. You can also bring food.

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Section 2: What do I need to know before starting treatment?

Talk to your oncology (cancer) doctor about vitamins, supplements and medicines you takes:

- Keep a list of all medicines (prescriptions or over the counter) vitamins, supplements, herbal medicines and homeopathic remedies you take. Share this list with your doctor at each visit.
- Do not take any vitamins or supplements during chemotherapy. They can interfere with your breast cancer treatment.
- You can take vitamin D.

Hair loss with Docetaxel (Taxotere)

- In rare cases, Docetaxel can cause lasting hair loss. It is more likely if you get 6 or more treatment cycles.
- You can use a cold cap cooling system to reduce hair loss.
- You can order the caps directly from DigniCap (www.dignicap.com) or Penguin Cold Caps (www.penguincoldcaps.com).
- Your order should include:
 - 1 kit
 - Extra treatment cards. You need a new card for each treatment
- Order the kit and treatment cards at least one week before your first treatment. Make sure it will come before your treatment starts.

Preventing neuropathy (numbness or tingling):

- After a few treatments, you might feel numbness or tingling in your fingers or toes. Please tell us if you have these symptoms.
- Pre-frozen cold socks and gloves can help prevent this. They can also prevent nail changes that may happen when you take Taxotere.
- You can buy Elasto-Gel gloves and socks online. Many online stores sell them.
- Bring them pre-frozen in a cooler on treatment days.
- Wear them 15 minutes before, during and 15 minutes after chemotherapy.
- You should wear each set for only 45 minutes. If your treatment takes an hour, you'll need 2 sets.
- You may wear thin cotton gloves and socks under the Elasto-gel ones for comfort.

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Section 3: What are the possible side effects?

Possible side effects:

- Nausea (feeling like you will throw up)
- Vomiting (throwing up)
- Diarrhea (loose bowel movements)
- Low blood counts
- Changes in blood tests
- Fatigue (very tired)
- Loss of appetite (You won't be hungry)
- Hair loss
- Skin and nail changes

Call us if you have any serious side effects.

Please let us know if you need help managing the symptoms.

How do I manage these side effects?

Nausea/vomiting:

- We will give you medicine to prevent nausea (anti-nausea medicines) before chemotherapy.
- We will send orders for anti-nausea medicines to your drugstore.
- Take these medicines if you feel like you will throw up.
- These are the medicines we may order for you:
 - Ondansetron (Zofran): 1 tablet every 8-12 hours as needed.
 - Prochlorperazine (Compazine): 1 tablet every 6 hours as needed.
 - Dexamethasone (Decadron): Take for 2 days after chemotherapy. Take it in the morning with food.
- Lemon and ginger may also help with nausea.
- If your nausea does not improve, let the team know. They can order extra medicines.

Diarrhea:

- Take Loperamide (Imodium) if you have loose bowel movements.
 - Start with 2 tablets.
 - Then take 1 tablet after each bowel movement until it stops.
 - Do not take more than 8 tablets in 24 hours.
- If the loose bowel movements don't stop, call your cancer doctor.
 - We may need to order Lomotil for you.
- Do not eat spicy or high-fiber foods. Try foods like white bread, white rice, bananas and matzo bread.
- Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated.

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Low Blood Counts:

- This treatment can increase your risk of anemia, bleeding and infection. Anemia is when the number of your red blood cells is low.
- Make sure you have a thermometer at home.
- Call your doctor if you have a fever (100.4°F or higher) or shaking chills.
 - Call us right away if you have a fever, even if it is in the evening or on the weekend. Call the after-hours number.
 - Go to the emergency room (ER) if needed.
- If your blood counts are low, we may need to make changes to your chemotherapy.
- We may add Pegfilgrastim (Neulasta) to help your white cells recover. It is a shot that we give 24 hours after chemotherapy.
- Neulasta may cause bone pain.
 - You can take Tylenol, Advil, or Aleve for this.
 - Claritin can also help with bone pain.
 - Start taking it the night before your shot.
 - Keep on taking it for 7 nights after each treatment.

Section 4: How will chemotherapy impact other parts of my health?

Will I be able to have children?

- Do not get pregnant while on chemotherapy. This medicine can cause harm to a growing fetus.
 - Please use barrier birth control if you still get your period (premenopausal).
- If you want to have a baby in the future, talk to your doctor about fertility preservation before starting treatment.

Can I get a flu vaccine?

- You can get the flu vaccine during chemotherapy.
- Ask your primary care doctor to give it to you during your chemotherapy break week.

Can I go to the dentist?

- Do not have major dental procedures for your teeth and gums while on chemotherapy.
- If truly needed, talk with your cancer doctor first. They will let you know if it is okay to have it done.

Contact Information

If you are not feeling well or have questions:

- Call the office for routine questions and scheduling.
- Use the Nurse Triage Line for clinical questions or concerns.
 - Tell us your diagnosis, current treatment, last treatment date, question(s) and/or symptoms.
- Use the after-hours number for urgent matters. Leave a message with the on-call service, and they will page the on-call doctor.
- You can message us using the UChart portal for questions that are not urgent.

Cancer Support Services

Cancer Support Services can help with emotional, spiritual, nutritional and physical wellness.

We offer these services at selected locations:

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| • Oncology social work | • Caregiver support |
| • Nutrition counseling | • Exercise physiology |
| • Psychosocial oncology | • Pastoral care |
| • Acupuncture | • Massage therapy |
| • Palliative care | • Music therapy |
| • Physical medicine and rehabilitation | • Pet therapy |

For more information or to use these services, call Cancer Support Services at **305-243-4129**.

