

## Health Professional Care Plan Information

### Treatment of Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer at The Christie

# Gemcitabine Chemotherapy

## Introduction

This information is for health care professionals involved in the care of patients receiving treatment at The Christie NHS Foundation Trust under the care of the Lung Cancer Disease Group, for non-small cell lung cancer.

## Brief description of the treatment

Gemcitabine is given on day 1 and 8 of a 21 day cycle. The patient attends the outpatient clinic for assessment chest xray, nadir bloods and review of side-effects around day 15. This schedule is repeated for 4 cycles in total.

## Mechanism of action

Gemcitabine is an antimetabolite.

## Anticipated benefits

When given for stage IV disease, this is a palliative/non-curative treatment aimed at disease control, and palliating symptoms for a period of time. At their clinic visit, patients are advised that unfortunately treatment is not curative but is aimed at controlling and delaying disease progression.

## Success rate and duration of benefit

There will be a discussion about the benefits and risks of treatment with the patient. This will be documented in correspondence from the medical team. Please contact the medical team for further information.

## Risks and side effects

The main risks and side-effects for this treatment are: renal impairment; myelosuppression and risk of neutropenic sepsis; nausea and vomiting, and lethargy. Other side-effects include skin rash, hair thinning, diarrhoea or constipation (often related to supportive anti-emetics).

Because of the potentially life-threatening risk of neutropenic sepsis, patients are counselled about the need to be vigilant in reporting infective symptoms, and a pyrexia of 37.5 degrees or higher, to the 24 hour telephone "Hotline" service.

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24 hour medical helpline: The Christie Hotline 0161 446 3658

## **Detailed description of care plan**

### ***Initial investigations***

Staging CT scan - thorax and abdomen, eGFR/EDTA clearance, routine blood tests (full blood count, renal and liver function), chest x-ray, ECG.

### ***Description of treatment***

Gemcitabine is given on day 1 and day 8 (1 hour infusions) of a 21 day cycle. Treatment is continues for up to 4 cycles depending on response and toxicity.

### ***Supportive medications***

Antiemetics – metoclopramide 10-20mg tds prn prescribed on day 1.

If antiemetic control is poor please consider change of medication to cyclizine, levomepromazine etc. We will review all supportive medications at the day 15 outpatient appointment.

### ***Planned investigations***

Chest xray at day 15 clinic review to assess disease response. Post treatment CT scan following final cycle chemotherapy or sooner if clinically indicated, or if there is suspicion of disease progression.

## **Alternative treatments**

Other treatment options include alternative standard chemotherapy regimens, targeted anti-cancer agents, palliative radiotherapy, consideration of clinical trials, or best supportive care. Palliative procedures such as the insertion of chest drains may also be used to aid palliation of symptoms. At progression, management is usually with best supportive and palliative care.

## **Responsibilities – who does what**

### ***The hospital team***

The Consultant team at The Christie will be responsible for supervising the oncologic care of the patient. This will include prescribing and supplying the chemotherapy and supportive care medication, and arranging tests and scans as required.

### ***Follow up***

The frequency and location of oncology follow-ups will be determined according to future treatment options and communicated to all relevant Health Care Professionals involved in the ongoing care of the patient. The aims of follow-ups will be discussed with the patient.

### ***GP and Community palliative care support***

Management of the community aspects of care remain the responsibility of the GP. Lung cancer patients are likely to have poor performance status, troublesome symptoms, and emotional needs; this is in addition to any co-morbidities that exist prior to a cancer diagnosis.

**In many cases life expectancy is less than 12 months therefore it is appropriate to add your patient to the GP practice Gold Standards Framework End of Life/Palliative Care Register.**

We encourage patients to accept referral to district and Macmillan nurse services early in their disease journey so they are known to palliative care services as and when their needs increase.

You will receive regular letters of update regarding your patient's progress.

### ***Other specialist teams***

If your patient is also under the care of other hospital teams they should continue to attend their appointments unless otherwise advised.

## **Contacts**

**24 hour medical helpline The Christie Hotline 0161 446 3658**