

Breast Oncology

Epirubicin, cyclophosphamide then docetaxel, trastuzumab (EC-TH)

*This leaflet is given in addition to your **consent form(s)** and **booklet**, 'Chemotherapy - a guide for patients and their carers'.*

Your treatment

Epirubicin and **cyclophosphamide** are given into a vein (intravenously) through a fine tube (cannula) as bolus injections, via a fast-flowing drip (infusion) over approximately 30 minutes every 21 days for 3 cycles. Then followed by **docetaxel** which is given into a vein (intravenously) through a fine tube (cannula) as an infusion over 1 hour every 21 days for 3 cycles. You will need to take dexamethasone twice a day for 3 days starting 24 hours before your docetaxel treatment. **Trastuzumab** is given with docetaxel intravenously or subcutaneously (under the skin) on day 1, every 21 days for 9 or 18 cycles (6 or 12 months).

Your HER2 directed therapy will continue beyond the chemotherapy depending on your type of breast cancer.

You will have a routine blood test before the start of each treatment. Occasionally we may not be able to go ahead with your treatment until your blood counts are back to a safe level. If this happens, your chemotherapy may be delayed a week.

You may be advised to have a line fitted or an implantable/subcutaneous port (portacath) to aid the delivery of your intravenous treatment. This will be organised by the clinic if it is required. Please ask your team for further information. Your **line or port needs to be removed** after all your intravenous treatments have finished. If you have not received an appointment for this, please contact the procedure team on **0161 446 3916**.

This treatment can have serious or possibly life-threatening side effects. It is very important that you report side effects straight away.

You are also vulnerable to infection while you are having chemotherapy. Minor infections can become life-threatening in a matter of hours if left untreated. Symptoms of infection include fever, shivering, sweats, sore throat, diarrhoea, discomfort when you pass urine, cough or breathlessness. We recommend that you use a digital thermometer so you can check your temperature. You can buy one from your local chemist.



If you feel unwell, you have symptoms of an infection or your temperature is 37.5°C or above, or below 36°C, contact The Christie Hotline straight away on 0161 446 3658 (open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

Possible side effects

See Cancer Research UK consent.

See 'Chemotherapy - a guide for patients and their carers'.

Contacts

If you have any general questions or concerns about your treatment, please ring the area where you are having treatment.

Administration enquiries **0161 918 7606/7610**

Chemotherapy nurse **0161 918 7171**

Clinical trials unit **0161 918 7663**

If you need the adjuvant HER2 therapy service, please contact:

Email: the-christie.adjuvant.herceptin@nhs.net

Telephone: **0161 446 8001**

If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

The Christie is committed to producing high quality, evidence based information for patients. Our patient information adheres to the principles and quality statements of the Information Standard. If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact **the-christie.patient.information@nhs.net**

For information and advice visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham, Salford or Macclesfield. Opening times can vary, please check before making a special journey.



Contact The Christie Hotline for
urgent support and specialist advice
The Christie Hotline: 0161 446 3658
Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week