

# Medical Oncology

## Drug Information Sheet

**Paclitaxel (taxol):** is a drug to treat your cancer.

**How will you get this drug?** A Cancer Care nurse will give this drug to you through an IV or your port.

You **MAY OR MAY NOT** experience the side effects listed below

<b>Possible Side Effects:</b>	<b>What to do:</b>
<b>Increased risk for infection due to decreased blood counts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid contact with people who have infections, colds or flu.</li> <li>• Wash your hands often.</li> <li>• Report chills or a fever of 100.4° or higher to your doctor right away, day or night.</li> <li>• Report any signs or symptoms of infection, such as cough, burning with urination, skin redness or sores.</li> <li>• Call your doctor before taking any medicine for a fever or chills.</li> </ul>
<b>Lower than normal red blood cells</b> Anemia	Call you doctor if you have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ shortness of breath with activity</li> <li>○ fatigue</li> <li>○ dizziness</li> <li>○ fast heartbeat or a heartbeat that does not feel normal</li> <li>○ headache</li> </ul>
<b>Serious allergic reactions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call the nurse right away for unusual feelings, such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ hot or flushed face and neck</li> <li>○ fever</li> <li>○ chills</li> <li>○ pain in the abdomen or back</li> <li>○ trouble breathing or wheezing</li> <li>○ chest tightness</li> <li>○ swelling of your face, lips, or tongue</li> <li>○ a rash</li> <li>○ itching</li> <li>○ hives</li> <li>○ cough</li> <li>○ runny or stuffy nose</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>After you return home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call 911 and go to the Emergency Department right away if you have any symptoms:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ trouble breathing</li> <li>○ chest tightness</li> <li>○ swelling of your face, lips, or tongue</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Call you doctor if you develop:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ a rash</li> <li>○ itching</li> <li>○ hives</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Possible Side Effects:</b>	<b>What to do:</b>

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<b>Hair loss</b> (total loss of body hair)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to your nurse about a wig or other options.</li> <li>• Ask about options to help decrease hair loss.</li> <li>• Hair will grow back 1-3 months after stopping chemotherapy.</li> </ul>
<b>Nausea/vomiting</b> <b>Decreased appetite</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take nausea medicine as instructed. Let your doctor know if it is not working for you.</li> <li>• Eat smaller, frequent meals.</li> <li>• Try liquid nutrition supplements (Boost, Ensure).</li> <li>• A dietitian is available to talk with you.</li> </ul>
<b>Diarrhea</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep well hydrated with water or fluids.</li> <li>• Take over the counter anti-diarrhea medicine (Immodium A-D™ or loperamide HCL). Use the “<i>Helpful Tips for Diarrhea after Chemotherapy or Radiation Therapy</i>” instruction sheet.</li> <li>• Call your doctor if you have:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ More than 4 loose stools in 24 hours</li> <li>○ A fever of 100.4° or higher</li> <li>○ bad stomach pain or cramps</li> <li>○ dizziness or feel faint</li> <li>○ bloody stools (dark, tarry or sticky)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Stomatitis</b> Sores in your throat or mouth (stomatitis) may occur a few days or a few weeks after medicine is given.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let your nurse or doctor know if you have sores in your mouth.</li> <li>• Avoid spicy, hot or cold foods.</li> <li>• Avoid using tobacco products, alcohol and mouthwash that contain alcohol.</li> <li>• Mix 1/4 teaspoon of baking soda and 1/8 teaspoon of salt with 2 cups of water. Rinse your mouth and gargle the mixture at least four times daily, especially after you eat. Do not swallow this mixture, just rinse and spit.</li> <li>• Use a soft toothbrush.</li> <li>• Your doctor may prescribe a special mouthwash for you to use.</li> </ul>
<b>Neuropathy</b> Numbness or tingling in hands or feet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell the doctor if this occurs or worsens.</li> <li>• Be careful because you may not feel an injury to your hands or feet that have reduced feeling or numbness.</li> <li>• Check areas that are numb for redness or open sores. Do this every day.</li> <li>• Apply cream or lotion to your hands and feet.</li> <li>• Avoid wearing tight footwear.</li> <li>• Avoid standing for long periods of time.</li> <li>• May continue even after treatment has stopped.</li> <li>• These nerve problems can get worse each time you get this drug. Sometimes, these nerve problems have not gone away after treatment stops.</li> </ul>
<b>Bone, muscle, joint pain</b>	Use pain prescription as directed. Notify your doctor if the pain is uncontrolled.
<b>Possible Side Effects:</b>	<b>What to do:</b>

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<p><b><i>Paclitaxel (taxol)</i> will be in urine and stool for 48 hours.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Caregivers will need to handle soiled linens and clothing wearing gloves or using a bag as a barrier.</li> <li>Keep your soiled items separate from others' dirty laundry and wash right away.</li> <li>Women who are pregnant should not handle your soiled clothing or linens.</li> <li>Wash any skin that body waste has touched with soap and water.</li> <li>You may use the same toilet that you normally use.</li> <li>If the toilet or toilet seat becomes dirty with urine, stool or vomit, clean the surfaces before other people use the toilet</li> <li>Wash hands with soap and water after using the toilet.</li> <li><b>It is safe to hug and kiss.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Avoid pregnancy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This drug may cause harm to the unborn baby if you take it while you are pregnant. If you are pregnant or you get pregnant while taking this drug, call your doctor right away.</li> <li>Use birth control that you can trust to prevent pregnancy while taking this drug and for <b>12</b> months after stopping this drug.</li> <li>If you or your sex partner gets pregnant, while taking this drug or within <b>12</b> months after stopping this drug, call your doctor right away.</li> <li>May cause fertility problems.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Less common side effects that may happen</b></p>	<p><b><u>What to do:</u></b></p>
<p><b>Stinging or burning if drug gets out of vein</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tell your nurse <b>right away</b>, if you have redness, burning, pain, swelling, or leaking of fluid where the drug is going into your body.</li> <li>The drug can cause severe damage to the tissue at the IV site.</li> </ul>
<p><b>These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor.</b></p>	