

## Gemcitabine and Docetaxel – Intravesical Treatment for Bladder

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Your health care provider has recommended that your bladder cancer be treated with gemcitabine (Gemzar) and docetaxel (Taxotere) **intravesical** therapy. Intravesical therapy is when a liquid medicine is placed into your bladder through a thin, flexible tube called a catheter. The drugs used for this treatment will stay in your bladder for up to 2 hours. This treatment may also be called Gem/Tax.

Gem/Tax is used to treat superficial bladder cancer. This type of bladder cancer is found on the inside lining of the bladder. These two chemotherapy drugs are given directly into the bladder to help kill cancer cells without causing harm to other parts of the body. You may continue with this treatment for up to one year.

To start, Gem/Tax is usually given 1 time each week for 6 weeks. This treatment can also be given 1 time each week every 4 weeks for maintenance therapy.

### Before Your Treatment

- Tell your nurse or doctor if you have trouble holding your urine for 2 hours or other problems urinating.
- If you have problems holding your urine, consider eliminating caffeine and alcohol for 24 hours before your treatment.
- **Do not** drink anything for 4 hours before your treatment. You may have a few sips of water to take your pre-treatment medicines, which include:
  - ▶ **Sodium Bicarbonate 1300 mg** (two 650 mg tablets) to be taken the night before and the morning of your treatment.
  - ▶ **Zofran 4mg** to be taken the morning of your treatment.
- It is best to have some urine in your bladder before your treatment. This helps your nurse ensure correct catheter placement.

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**This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.**

## On the Day of Your Treatment

- You will be asked to undress from the waist down and will be given a sheet to cover yourself.
- Your nurse will ask you to lie on your back on the exam table.
- The catheter will be placed into your urethra to let the urine drain from your bladder.
- Once the urine is drained, gemcitabine will be put into your bladder through the same catheter. The catheter is then plugged to keep the drug in your bladder. You will lie with the catheter in place for about 90 minutes.
- When this part of the treatment is complete, the catheter is unplugged and emptied.
- Your bladder is then irrigated (rinsed out) with saline.
- The 2nd medicine, docetaxel, is then put into the bladder through the same catheter.
- After the docetaxel is given, the catheter is removed to keep the medicine in your bladder.
- Tell your nurse if you have pain or bladder spasms. There may be medicines that can help you feel more comfortable during your next treatment.
- You will need to lie flat for **15 minutes** after the procedure. After 15 minutes, you will be able to get up, wash your genital area and get dressed.
- You will wear a pad in your underwear to soak up any liquid that may leak out.

## After Your Treatment

- You may go straight home. You may drive if you were not given any medicine that may affect your judgement.
- **Do not** drink anything for 2 hours after your treatment. After 2 hours, drink plenty of water to flush your bladder.
- To keep the Gem/Tax in your bladder, do not urinate for at least 2 hours, if possible. After 2 hours, you may urinate as needed. **Do not** hold your urine for longer than 3 hours.
- Record or make note of any new bladder symptoms (i.e. spasms, urgency, frequency) you have after treatment, especially in the first few days. This can help your treatment team adjust your care plan.
- You may return to your normal activities.

## Safety Precautions

- **Use the same toilet** in your home each time you urinate for 6 hours after your treatment.
- To keep from splashing or spraying, **sit on the toilet when you urinate.**
- **During the first 6 hours after treatment, follow these steps each time after you urinate:**
  - ▶ Wash your hands and genital area with soap and warm water each time after you urinate to keep your skin from being irritated.
  - ▶ **Before you flush,** close the lid of the toilet.
  - ▶ Any clothes or linens that have urine on them should be washed on the hot cycle in a washing machine. Wash soiled laundry separately.
  - ▶ If urine splashes or spills on the floor, toilet seat or other areas, clean it up using dish soap or laundry detergent and water. Rinse with clean water.
- **If you are sexually active, you or your partner must wear a condom** during treatment and for 1 week after your last treatment.

## Side Effects

**These symptoms usually do not last longer than 3 to 5 days.** There are medicines that can help reduce side effects. Tell your health care provider or nurse if you have any of the following:

- Fever
- Frequent urination
- Urgent need to urinate
- Blood in your urine
- Burning while you urinate
- Bladder spasms or pain
- Arthritic or joint pain
- Flu-like symptoms

**Call your health care provider right away if you have a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38.6 degrees Celsius) or higher.**