Bevacizumab (Avastin)

What is Bevacizumab (be-va-SIZ-uh-mab) and how does it work?

Bevacizumab is a type of targeted cancer therapy called a "monoclonal antibody." There are different names for this medicine with Avastin being the most common. This medicine may be given alone or with other medicines to treat cancer. Bevacizumab cuts off the supply of blood and nutrients to cancer cells. This prevents cells from dividing and making new cancer cells.

What should I tell my doctor before I start this treatment?

Talk to your doctor about the following:

- If you have ever had chemotherapy or anti-cancer treatment and the names of the medicines you were given.
- If you have ever had blood pressure, heart or kidney problems.
- If you have ever had a bleeding disorder.
- If you have had surgery or medical/dental procedure(s) in the last 6 months or plan to have surgery or medical/dental procedure(s) in the near future.
- If you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant. Your doctor will talk with you about what birth control to use when you take this medicine.
- If you are breastfeeding.
- If you have been told that you need to start a new medicine.
- The medicines/pills you take, including:
  - Medicines ordered by any of your doctors
  - Herbs
  - Vitamins
  - Over-the-counter medicines

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

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How does my doctor decide my treatment dose?

To determine your treatment dose, your doctor will review the stage of cancer, your height, your weight, the medicine(s) you take, how well your kidneys work and any other health problems you have.

You will receive a dose every 2 to 3 weeks. This medicine may be given on a different schedule along with other chemotherapy medicine you take. You will see your doctor or nurse practitioner every month while you take this medicine.

Can I eat or drink before my treatment?

It is best to eat a small meal before you get this treatment. It may help to drink plenty of non-caffeinated fluids. If you have been told to limit fluids, check with your doctor about how much you can drink.

How will my treatment be given?

Bevacizumab is given directly into your blood stream through a tube (IV) placed in your arm or chest. This medicine comes in a bag with tubing attached and your nurse will connect the tubing to a pump. This treatment takes about 30 minutes.

Your entire visit, including your doctor's appointment and your treatment may take 3 hours or more. Your appointment length depends on the schedule of the clinic and the treatments you are to receive at that visit.

What are the side effects of this treatment?

Every person responds differently to treatment. Some of the more common side effects of this medicine are:

- Bleeding
- Increase in blood pressure
- Slow healing from cuts and wounds
- Headaches
- Increased risk of blood clots
- Change in voice or hoarse voice
- Fatigue

- Weakness
- Pain
- Mouth pain or open sores in the mouth
- Skin changes
- Decreased appetite
- Constipation
- Diarrhea
- Low white blood cell count (may increase your risk for infection)

When should I call my doctor?

You should call your doctor right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or higher

  A fever can be life-threatening if not treated. Your doctor may ask you to go to the hospital.

- Chills, sore throat, cough or a wound that does not get better
- Unusual bleeding, bruising or opening of a wound or surgery scar
- Open sores in your mouth
- Nausea that makes you unable to eat or drink
- Trouble swallowing, coughing, or choking when you eat
- Skin redness or blisters at the place where your treatment was given
- Bleeding or bruising, including nose bleeds, bloody or black stools or blood in your urine
- Diarrhea (4 or more loose stools in 24 hours)
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Sudden confusion, changes in vision, loss of movement, trouble speaking, chest pain, sudden or severe headaches, loss of consciousness or seizures

Is there anything else I should know about this treatment?

- Some patients may have an allergic reaction while this treatment is being given. If an allergic reaction happens during your treatment, your nurse will give you medicine to help manage the reaction and extra precautions will be taken when your next treatment is given.
- Chemotherapy may make it harder for your body to fight infections. Wash your hands often and stay away from people who are sick.
- You may need to stop using bevacizumab several weeks before and after a surgery or medical/dental procedure(s). This medicine can increase your risk of bleeding or slow wound healing.

For more information about cancer, chemotherapy, side effects or how to take care of yourself during treatment, refer to your **Chemotherapy and You** book, or ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

Go to this video link: http://cancer.osu.edu/patientedvideos **to learn more about your cancer diagnosis, treatment and care.**