

Carboplatin

A chemotherapy drug

This handout explains the drug carboplatin, which is used to treat cancer. The handout includes how to manage common side effects.

What is carboplatin?

Carboplatin is a medicine that is used to fight cancer. It interferes with the growth and spread of cancer cells in the body. It helps treat cancer of the ovaries, head, and neck. It may be used at the same time as other medicines.

How is it given?

Carboplatin is given as an *infusion*. This means it is given into a vein in your arm.



Carboplatin is given as an infusion into a vein in your arm.

What are the risks?

Carboplatin may:

- Decrease how well the drug *phenytoin* (Dilantin) works. Please tell your care team if you are taking this medicine.
- Increase your risk for higher INR (*International Normalised Ratio*). This puts you at higher risk for bleeding. Please tell your care team if you are taking *warfarin* (Coumadin).

What are the side effects?

- **Decreased white blood cells and higher risk of infection:** Carboplatin can cause low white blood cell counts. This puts you at risk for an infection. To protect yourself:
 - Wash your hands often
 - Avoid crowds and people who are sick
 - Bathe often to keep your body clean

Call your ABTC nurse if you have:

- A fever higher than 100.4°F (38°C)
- Burning when you urinate (pee)
- A sore that becomes red, has drainage, or does not heal
- A cough with mucus that will not go away

Call your ABTC nurse BEFORE you take any medicine for a fever or chills.

- **Decreased platelet count:** Carboplatin puts you at risk for a low platelet count or bleeding.

Call your ABTC nurse if you have:

- A bloody nose that bleeds for more than 5 minutes, even when you apply pressure
- Gums that bleed a lot when you floss or brush
- A cut that keeps oozing in spite of pressure
- A lot of bruising

Call for help RIGHT AWAY if you have:

- Sudden, severe headache
 - Blood in your urine or stool
 - Blood in your mucus when you cough
 - Bleeding that will not stop
- **Hair loss (alopecia):** Your hair will grow back after treatment is over. Some people choose to wear scarves, caps, or wigs during treatment.
 - **Nausea and vomiting:** You will receive anti-nausea medicine before your infusion of carboplatin. We will also give you a prescription for an anti-nausea medicine called *ondansetron* to help manage your nausea at home. Read your prescription to know what dose to take and how often.
 - Call your ABTC nurse if ondansetron does not ease nausea or vomiting.
 - Help prevent nausea by eating small meals often during the day instead of eating 3 large meals.

- **Numbness or tingling:** Carboplatin may cause numbness or tingling in your hands and feet. This is more common for patients who are 65 years of age or older. Tell your ABTC nurse if you have any changes in your sense of touch. These changes might include a burning feeling, pain on your skin, and muscle weakness.

Precautions

Birth Control (Contraception)

- Women will have a pregnancy test and a blood draw before they start carboplatin therapy.
- While taking carboplatin:
 - Women should not become pregnant or breastfeed.
 - Men should not get a partner pregnant.
 - Men and women of childbearing age should use birth control during therapy and for at least 1 month after the last dose.
 - Both men and women should use a barrier form of protection during sex for 48 hours after taking their last dose of carboplatin.

Fertility

Carboplatin may affect your ability to conceive or father a child.

Safe Handling

Caregivers should wear gloves when helping clean up any bodily fluids, such as blood or urine.

Vaccines

During your carboplatin treatment:

- Avoid live vaccines.
- Avoid having close contact anyone who has received a live vaccine in the past 6 weeks.
- Talk with your provider before getting vaccinated.

Alcohol

Please avoid alcohol on the days you take carboplatin. Talk with your ABTC team if not drinking alcohol on your chemotherapy days would be hard for you.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

To talk with a nurse:

Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., call 206.598.2282 and select option 2.

After hours and on weekends and holidays, call our Community Care Line at 206.598.3300.