CVD: Cisplatin, Vinblastine, and Dacarbazine

What is CVD?

It is the short name for the drugs used in this chemotherapy treatment. The three drugs you will receive during this treatment are Cisplatin ("C"), Vinblastine ("V"), and Dacarbazine (DTIC-DomeTM or "D"). This chemotherapy will be given daily for 5 days.

What is Cisplatin (SIS-pla-tin) and how does it work?

Cisplatin is a chemotherapy drug known as an “alkylating agent.” Cisplatin works to stop fast growing cancer cells from dividing and making new cells. This will be given daily on days 2 through 5.

What is Vinblastine (vin-BLAS-teen) and how does it work?

Vinblastine is a chemotherapy drug known as an “anti-microtubule inhibitor.” This drug fights cancer cells by stopping fast growing cancer cells from dividing and making new cancer cells. This drug will be given daily on days 1 through 5.

What is Dacarbazine (da-KAR-ba-zeen) and how does it work?

Dacarbazine is a chemotherapy drug known as an “alkylating agent.” Dacarbazine works to stop fast growing cancer cells from dividing and making new cells. This drug will be given on the first day.

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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Why am I getting three chemotherapy drugs for my cancer?
These drugs work to stop fast growing cancer cells from dividing and making new cells, but they attack the cancer cells differently. Giving the three drugs together makes the treatment more effective.

What should I tell my doctor before getting chemotherapy?
Talk to your doctor about the following:
- If you have ever had chemotherapy and the names of the chemotherapy drugs you were given.
- If you are pregnant or think you may become pregnant.
- If you are breastfeeding.
- If you have been told that you need to start a new medicine.
- The medicines/pills you are taking including:
  - Medicines prescribed by any of your doctors
  - Herbs
  - Vitamins
  - Over-the-counter medicines
- If you have ever had heart, liver, or kidney problems.

How does my doctor decide my chemotherapy dose?
To determine your treatment dose, your doctor will review the following: your height, your weight, your medicines, how well your heart, liver and kidneys are working, and any health problems you have.

The dose you receive is based on your height and weight and may be adjusted if you have had side effects from any other medicines used to treat your cancer.

You will receive treatment daily for five days, every three weeks. Your dose may be reduced or delayed if you have side effects.

How will my treatment be given?
- One hour before your chemotherapy, you will be given several medicines to prevent nausea or vomiting.
• Vinblastine is given directly into your blood stream through a tube (IV) placed in your arm or chest. Your nurse will stay with you while the Vinblastine is given. This treatment will take about 10 minutes. **Tell your nurse right away if you feel any pain, stinging, or burning while getting this drug.**

• Dacarbazine is given directly into your blood stream through a tube (IV) placed in your arm or chest. Dacarbazine comes in a bag with tubing attached. The nurse will connect the tubing to a pump. This medicine will be given over 45 minutes.

• Cisplatin is given directly into your blood stream through a tube (IV) placed in your arm or chest. Cisplatin comes in a bag with tubing attached. The nurse will connect the tubing to a pump. This medicine will be given over one hour.

**Day 1:** You will receive Vinblastine followed by Dacarbazine. This is the only day you will receive Dacarbazine.

**Day 2 - 5:** You will receive Vinblastine followed by Cisplatin.

Your entire visit, including your doctor’s appointment and your treatment will take about 6 hours.

**What are the side effects of this treatment?**

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

• Nausea and vomiting
• Damage to the kidneys
• Decrease in the amount of electrolytes in your bloodstream (your doctor will check the amount of electrolytes in your blood before each treatment)
• Local pain, burning feeling and irritation (sore, tender and itchy) at the needle site while your treatment is being given
• Low blood counts. Your white and red blood cells and platelets may be lower while receiving this treatment. This may increase your risk for infection, anemia (low red blood cell count) and bleeding/bruising.
• Poor appetite
• Increase in enzymes made by your liver (your doctor will check your blood to see how your liver is working)
• Fatigue and weakness

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Other less common side effects of this treatment include:

- Numbness, tingling, and pain in the hands and feet
- Ringing in the ears, dizziness, balance problems
- Taste changes
- Constipation (not able to have a bowel movement) may occur within 1 to 3 days after your treatment. You may also have abdominal cramping. It is important to have regular bowel movements.
- Sensitivity to the sun
- Hair loss
- Muscle pain and joint pain

Rare side effects of this treatment include:

- Patients who get treatment with Dacarbazine have a slightly higher risk of getting a rare form of blood cancer, called “leukemia”. Your doctor can tell you more about this risk.

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
- Chills, sore throat, cough or a wound that does not get better
- Signs of an allergic reaction, including:
  - Difficulty breathing, wheezing, chest pain or tightness
  - Swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat
  - Rash
- Nausea that prevents you from eating or drinking, even after you have taken your anti-nausea medicine
- Vomiting (more than 4 to 5 times in a 24 hour period)
- Extreme fatigue (feel more tired than usual with or without activity)
- Blood in your urine or stools or dark, tarry, sticky stools
- Unusual bleeding or bruising
- Changes in urine, no urine output for more than 12 hours
- Pain, redness, or swelling at the place where your chemotherapy was given

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Is there anything else I should know about this treatment?

- You will have blood drawn before each treatment to make sure you can receive your treatment.
- Chemotherapy may make it harder for your body to fight infections. Wash your hands often and avoid people who are sick.
- Chemotherapy can change how your body reacts to vaccines. Talk to your doctor before getting any vaccines.
- Avoid sun exposure. Wear SPF 30 (or higher) sunblock and protective clothing.
- **Do not get pregnant while taking this treatment.**
  - If you are a woman, talk with your doctor about what birth control to use.
  - If you are a man, you must use a barrier method of birth control, such as a condom.
- This treatment may affect your ability to have children. Talk to your doctor before getting chemotherapy if you are planning to have children in the future.
- You should drink 8 to 10 eight ounce glasses of non-caffeinated fluid each day throughout your treatment. It is important to keep hydrated while you are receiving chemotherapy.

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

You may also find it helpful to watch The James Patient Education videos at [http://cancer.osu.edu/patientedvideos](http://cancer.osu.edu/patientedvideos) to help you learn tips for managing treatment side effects.