What is Doxorubicin Liposomal (doks-oh-ROO-bi-sin lye-poe-SOE-mal) and how does it work?
Dxorubicin is a chemotherapy drug known as an “anti-tumor antibiotic.” It is a bright red color. It is a natural medicine that comes from a type of soil fungus. This drug fights cancer by stopping the fast growing cancer cells from making new cells. It also keeps the damaged cancer cells from continuing to grow.

The “Liposomal” portion of the drug is a coating that helps the medicine to go undetected by the immune system and cancer cells. This helps the medicine stay in your body longer and get closer to the tumor cells to kill them.

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 have ever had heart or liver problems.
- If you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant. Your doctor will talk with you about birth control while getting chemotherapy.
- 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
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 liver and heart are working, and any other health problems you have. You will receive a dose every three to four weeks. You will see the doctor or nurse practitioner before each chemotherapy treatment.

Should I eat or drink before my treatment?
It is best to eat a small meal before getting your chemotherapy. Drinking plenty of non-caffeinated fluids may also be helpful. However, if you have been told to limit fluids, check with your doctor about how much you can drink.

How will my treatment be given?
You will be given several medicines, 30 to 60 minutes before your treatment, to prevent you from having an allergic reaction, and to prevent nausea and vomiting. These medicines may affect your abilities, so for your safety you should have someone drive you home.

Doxil is given directly into your bloodstream through a tube (IV) placed in your arm or chest. This treatment will take about 2 to 2 1/2 hours for your first dose. If you tolerate this dose, your future doses will take about 60 minutes. Tell your nurse right away if you feel any pain, stinging or burning while getting this chemotherapy drug.

Your entire visit, including your doctor’s appointment and your treatment will take about 3 to 4 hours.

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

- Pain where the Doxil went into your vein
- Red urine for 1 or 2 days after getting Doxil
- Fatigue
- Hair thinning
- Mouth pain or open sores in the mouth
- Diarrhea
- Low white blood cell count (may increase your risk for infection)
- Low hemoglobin (may cause you to have less energy and tire more easily)

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- Low platelet count (may cause you to bleed more easily or longer than normal and have more bruising)
- Changes to the skin on the palms of your hands or the bottom of your feet. This is known as **Hand-Foot Syndrome**. The skin may become red, irritated, sore, or blister and peel. This may happen days to weeks after your treatment. Tell your doctor if you have any of these symptoms. Here are some ways to help with this condition:
  - Do not wear tight clothing or shoes.
  - Do not use hot water (for example: washing dishes, hot tubs, saunas or long showers). Use warm water for bathing and showers.
  - Do not do activities that increase friction and heat to your skin such as repeatedly rubbing your hands together, or walking on hot sand or the pavement.
  - Do not rub the areas. Gently use moisturizing lotions and soap. Use soap and lotions that are free of perfumes or fragrances.

**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
- Open sores in your mouth
- Nausea that prevents you from eating or drinking
- Vomiting even after you have taken your anti-nausea medicine
- Skin redness or blisters where the Doxil was given
- Bleeding or bruising, including bloody or black stools or blood in your urine
- Diarrhea (4 or more loose stools in 24 hours)
- Changes in your heartbeat
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Swelling in feet or ankles
- Fast weight gain

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Is there anything else I should know about this treatment?

- Doxil may cause problems with the pumping of your heart. Your doctor may order a test to check your heart before you start taking this chemotherapy drug and every several months while you are getting treatment.

- Some patients may have an allergic reaction while this treatment is being given. To prevent this, you will be given a medicine before your treatment. If an allergic reaction happens during your treatment, the 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 avoid people who are sick.

- This treatment requires special precautions to prevent the chemotherapy drugs from coming into contact (through blood, urine, bowel movements, vomit and vaginal or seminal fluids) with others. Your chemotherapy nurse will give you guidelines to follow for 48 hours after receiving chemotherapy.

- Chemotherapy can change how your body reacts to vaccines. Talk to your doctor before getting any vaccines.

- You should drink 8 to 10 eight-ounce glasses of non-caffeinated fluid each day throughout your treatment. This is important to help protect your bladder and keep you hydrated while you are receiving chemotherapy.

- This treatment may cause women to stop having menstrual cycles. Depending on your age, your menstrual cycles may or may not return.

- 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.

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 to help you learn tips for managing treatment side effects.