Ipilimumab

What is Ipilimumab (ip-i-LIM-yoo-mab) and how does it work?
Ipilimumab is a type of targeted cancer therapy called a “monoclonal antibody”. Another name for this drug is Yervoy. Ipilimumab works by increasing the activity of your immune system.

What should I tell my doctor before getting this treatment?
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 an active condition where your immune system attacks your cells (autoimmune disease). These may include: ulcerative colitis, Crohn’s disease, lupus or sarcoidosis.
- If you have had an organ transplant.
- If you liver damage from disease or medicines.
- If you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant. Your doctor will talk with you about birth control while getting treatment.
- 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
- Any other medical conditions.

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

How does my doctor decide my treatment dose?

To determine your treatment dose, your doctor will review the following: your stage of cancer, your height, your weight, how well your liver is working and any health problems you have.

You will receive 4 doses of Ipilimumab. You will receive one dose every three weeks. Your dose may be delayed if you have side effects. You will see the doctor or nurse practitioner when you are getting this treatment.

Should I eat or drink before my treatment?

It is best to eat a small meal before getting your treatment. 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?

Ipilimumab is given directly into your blood stream through a tube (IV) placed in your arm or chest. Ipilimumab comes in a bag with tubing attached. The nurse will connect the tubing to a pump. This treatment takes about 90 minutes.

Your entire visit, including your doctor’s appointment and your treatment will take between 4 to 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:

- Fatigue or feeling tired
- Itching
- Diarrhea (can be explosive and watery)
- Mild nausea
- Skin rash
- Abdominal pain
- Fever
- Headaches
- Anemia
- Cough
- Colitis
- Allergic reaction (trouble breathing, hives or swelling of the face)
- Hepatitis
- Eye pain or redness

**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.**

- Nausea that prevents you from eating or drinking
- Diarrhea (4 or more loose stools in 24 hours)
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Pain in your chest
- Blood in your stool
- Dark, tarry, sticky stools
- Blurred vision, double vision or other vision problems
- Eye pain or redness

**Is there anything else I should know about this treatment?**

- You will have blood drawn before each dose of Ipilimumab to make sure your kidneys, liver and thyroid are working properly.

- This treatment may make it harder for your body to fight infections. Wash your hands often and avoid people who are sick.

- While taking Ipilimumab, men should use a barrier method of birth control (condom) when having sex.

- Women should not get pregnant while taking Ipilimumab. This drug may cause premature delivery, death of an unborn baby or stillbirth.

- Drink plenty of non-caffeinated fluids to prevent dehydration. This is especially important if you are having diarrhea.
• This drug may cause inflammation of hormone glands, especially the pituitary, adrenal and thyroid glands. Tell your doctor if you have any of the following symptoms:
  ▶ Persistent or unusual headache
  ▶ Unusual sluggishness
  ▶ Feeling cold all the time
  ▶ Weight gain
  ▶ Changes in mood or behavior
  ▶ Dizziness or fainting

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.

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.