

 <small>瑪麗醫院</small> <small>QUEEN MARY HOSPITAL</small>	<b>Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology</b>	Document No	OGGO-0510-03-05-E-(I)
		Issue Date	Jul 2016
	<b>Subject</b> Side effects and Nursing tips of the chemotherapy – Epirubicin (4-EPI)	Review Date	Jul 2019
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## Epirubicin (4-EPI)

Common side effects	Caring tips
Bone marrow suppression especially low haemoglobin level	Symptoms of anaemia include shortness of breath, dizziness and palpitation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treatment of anaemia is red blood cell transfusion or supplement with red blood cell-growth factor</li> </ul>
Nausea & Vomiting  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chemotherapy inhibits growth of cancer cells but may affect gastric and brain cells causing nausea &amp; vomiting. This side effect will subside when chemotherapy stops</li> <li>• Doctor will prescribe adequate anti-emetics before chemotherapy</li> <li>• Take anti-emetic half hour before meal can alleviate vomiting</li> <li>• Diet advice               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Small &amp; frequent meals can decrease gastric-full symptoms</li> <li>○ Don't take large amount of fluid during or after meal to avoid gastric-full symptoms. Better to take fluid between meals</li> <li>○ Avoid oily, too hot or too cold food</li> <li>○ Eat &amp; chew slowly</li> <li>○ Take a rest after meal but avoid lying down immediately after meal. Better to stand up or walk</li> <li>○ Avoid non-delicious food</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Other methods such as relaxation exercise, hypnosis &amp; acupuncture have certain effect on precipitating vomiting</li> <li>• In severe vomiting, intravenous fluid and electrolyte will be infused to maintain body fluid balance</li> </ul>
Mucosal ulcer  	Ulcer and white patches will affect appetite and cause difficulty in swallowing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine your oral-cavity daily</li> <li>• Use soft toothbrush</li> <li>• Maintain oral hygiene: oral gargling daily, use gargle prescribed by doctor if there is oral ulcer</li> <li>• Dietary advice               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Avoid irritation to the oral-cavity</li> <li>○ Avoid too hot and cold food</li> <li>○ Increase fluid intake and food rich in water (e.g. ice-cream, fruits, etc.)</li> <li>○ Cut food into pieces</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Diarrhea  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink large amount of water</li> <li>• Take more food rich in potassium (e.g. Bananas, oranges, potatoes, pears and almond juice, etc.) unless doctor has other prescription.</li> <li>• Avoid alcoholic or beverage with caffeine (e.g. tea, coffee and candies)</li> <li>• Take anti-diarrheals prescribed by doctor</li> </ul>

Remarks : Different patient will have different side effects toward chemotherapy. The response should only be compared with that after previous chemotherapy for each individual. Please inform doctor for this condition on follow-up.

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Hair loss  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hair loss caused by chemotherapy will grow up again. Usually, hair will grow 2 to 3 months after chemotherapy completed</li> <li>• Tips for alleviate anxiety caused by hair loss           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Buy hair-wig or cap before early stage of hair loss</li> <li>○ Understand the reason and level of hair loss</li> <li>○ express the feelings towards hair loss</li> <li>○ Know that hair will grow again and the color and quality may have some change (e.g. hair will become curl or grey)</li> <li>○ Avoid using hair-dryer, hair-curler and perm hair which will cause hair loss</li> <li>○ Use cap and sun-block to protect your head from sunshine</li> <li>○ Keep hair scalp clean after hair completely lost</li> <li>○ Cut hair before chemotherapy or use hair-wig, cap or scarf</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Skin pigmentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply appropriate lubricant cream</li> <li>• Avoid direct sunshine</li> </ul>
Cardiac toxicity  	An echocardiogram will be required before the first and fourth treatment. An electrocardiogram will be performed before each treatment.
Red urine colour during chemotherapy period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase fluid intake</li> <li>• Follow up on observation of urine color</li> </ul>

Rare side effects	Caring tips
Bone marrow suppression especially low white blood cell and platelet count	<p>Low white blood cell count will cause infection easily</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If fever develops, patient must seek medical treatment immediately</li> <li>• Chemotherapy must be stopped and delay for a few days until WBC count back to normal</li> <li>• Wash hands frequently</li> <li>• Avoid contact infectious patient (e.g. Cold)</li> <li>• Away from crowded area &amp; animal contact</li> </ul> <p>Low platelet count will delay blood clotting function &amp; easily cause bruising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use soft toothbrush &amp; maintain oral hygiene, avoid using interdental brush</li> <li>• Avoid tight clothing and avoid strong sneezing, bowel enema, vaginal douching or tampon</li> <li>• Avoid using drugs that prolong bleeding (e.g. aspirin, anti-coagulant)</li> <li>• Maintain balanced diet and take adequate nutrition</li> </ul>
Extravasation and local inflammation	<p>If chemotherapy drug leaks into the tissue area outside the infusion catheter, the surrounding area will become red, swollen and painful on touching, the skin tissue will become necroses in severe case</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chemotherapy must be stopped immediately</li> <li>• Antidote, anti-inflammatory medications &amp; adequate nursing care will be applied. Inflammation will usually subside within 1 to 2 weeks. Please notify the nurse if any abnormality occurs during or after chemotherapy</li> </ul>