




 瑪麗醫院 QUEEN MARY HOSPITAL	Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology	Document No	OGGO-0510-03-08-E-(I)
		Issue Date	Jul 2016
	Subject Side effects and Nursing tips of the chemotherapy – Methotrexate (MTX)	Review Date	Jul 2019
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Methotrexate (MTX)

Common side effects	Caring tips
Mucosal & pharyngeal ulcer 	Ulcer or white patches will affect appetite and cause difficulty in swallowing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine your oral-cavity daily • Use soft toothbrush • Maintain oral hygiene: oral gargling daily, use drug-gargle prescribed by doctor if there is oral ulcer • Dietary advice, avoid irritation to the oral-cavity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Avoid too hot and cold food ○ Increase water intake and food rich in water (e.g. ice-cream, fruits, etc.) ○ Cut food into pieces
Bone marrow suppression	Low white blood cell count will cause infection easily <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If fever develops, patient must seek medical treatment immediately. Chemotherapy must be stopped and delay for a few days until WBC count back to normal • Wash hand frequently • Avoid contact infectious patient (e.g. Cold) • Inform your nurse & doctor if you have fever $>38^{\circ}\text{C}$, malaise or any signs of infection Low platelet count will delay blood clotting function & easily cause bruising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use soft toothbrush & maintain oral hygiene, avoid using interdental brush • Avoid tight clothing and avoid strong sneezing, bowel enema, vaginal douching or tampon • Avoid using drugs that prolong bleeding e.g. aspirin, anti-coagulant Symptoms of anemia include breathing difficulty, dizziness, headache and palpitation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treatment of anemia is blood transfusion or to replace growth factors aid in haemoglobin production
Nausea & Vomiting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chemotherapy inhibits growth of cancer cells but may also affect gastric and brain cells causing nausea & vomiting. This side effect will subside when chemotherapy stops • Doctor will prescribe adequate anti-emetics before chemotherapy • Take anti-emetic half hour before meal can alleviate vomiting • Diet advice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Small & frequent meals can decrease gastric-full symptoms ○ Don't take large amount of fluid during or after meal to avoid gastric-full symptoms. Better to take fluid between meals ○ Avoid oily, too hot or too cold foods ○ Eat & chew slowly ○ Take a rest after meal but avoid lying down immediately after meal. Better to stand up or walk ○ Avoid non-delicious food • Other methods such as relaxation exercise, hypnosis & acupuncture have certain effect on precipitating vomiting • In severe vomiting, intravenous fluid and electrolyte will be infused to maintain body fluid balance

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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Decrease appetite 	Small & frequent meals, maintain balanced diet, avoid non-delicious, spicy & oily food. Take more beverage & snack, easy-swallowing, digestible & soft food. Try to take sufficient calories & protein to maintain your body weight
Epidermal change	(Rash, itchiness, urticaria, hair loss, bruise, acne) Chemo agent may affect epidermal tissue and cause mild discomfort, (e.g. dryness, desquamation) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply appropriate lubricant cream • Avoid sunshine, hot bath • Take drug for itchiness prescribed by doctor if necessary
Photosensitivity 	Skin will easily burn by sunshine during chemotherapy period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid direct sunshine • Use cap or umbrella • Use Sun-block cream with SPF15 at outdoor
Nerve damage if high dose of chemo agent used	Doctor will adjust dosage of chemo agent according to condition

Rare side effects	Caring tips
Headache 	Have sufficient rest. Take pain-killer prescribed by doctor if necessary
Slightly affect liver & renal function	Chemotherapy will only be proceeded if liver & renal function before each cycle is normal
Immediate hypersensitivity reaction caused by chemotherapy agent	(During the initial phase of chemotherapy, you may have allergic symptoms such as rash, facial oedema, shortness of breath, palpitation, low blood pressure & endanger life in severe case) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If hypersensitivity reactions occur, chemotherapy will be stopped and treatment will be carried out immediately • Doctor will perform examination & first aid treatment • Anti-hypersensitive drug will be prescribed