

# Rituximab (Rituxan) and GemOx (Gemcitabine, Oxaliplatin)

**Care Team Contact Information:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Pharmacy Contact Information:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Diagnosis:** \_\_\_\_\_

- This treatment is often used for diffuse large B-cell lymphoma (DLBCL).
- It may also be used for other reasons.

**Goal of Treatment:** \_\_\_\_\_

- Treatment may continue for a certain time period, until it no longer works, or until side effects are no longer controlled.

## Treatment Regimen

- The immunotherapy part of your treatment is called rituximab.
- The chemotherapy part of your treatment is called by its acronym: GemOx
  - **Gem:** Gemcitabine
  - **Ox:** Oxaliplatin

Treatment Name	How the Treatment Works	How the Treatment is Given
Rituximab (rih-TUK-sih-mab): Rituxan (rih-TUK-sun), Riabni, Ruxience, Truxima	Helps your immune system find and attack cancer cells by targeting a specific protein on their surface.	Infusion into a vein (intravenous (IV) infusion).
Gemcitabine (jem-SY-tuh-been): Gemzar (JEM-zar)	Stops cancer cells from making the instructions they need to grow and multiply, causing the cells to die.	Infusion into a vein (intravenous (IV) infusion).
Oxaliplatin (ok-SA-lih-pla-tin): Eloxatin (eh-LOK-sah-tin)	Slows down or stops the growth of cancer cells by damaging the genetic material that cancer cells need to multiply.	Infusion into a vein (intravenous (IV) infusion).

**Note:** Your care team may give you rituximab and hyaluronidase (Rituxan Hycela) instead of rituximab. Rituximab and hyaluronidase is given as an injection under the skin (subcutaneous injection) into the stomach area (abdomen) over 5 to 7 minutes.

## Treatment Administration and Schedule

Treatment is typically repeated every 2 or 3 weeks. This length of time is called a “cycle”.

**Option #1: Every 2 Weeks**

- Rituximab, gemcitabine, and oxaliplatin are given on Day 1.

Treatment Name	Cycle 1								Next Cycle
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	...	Day 14	Day 1
Rituximab	✓								✓
Gemcitabine	✓								✓
Oxaliplatin	✓								✓

**Option #2: Every 3 Weeks**

- Rituximab, gemcitabine, and oxaliplatin are given on Day 1.

Treatment Name	Cycle 1								Next Cycle
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	...	Day 21	Day 1
Rituximab	✓								✓
Gemcitabine	✓								✓
Oxaliplatin	✓								✓

## Appointments

Appointments may include regular check-ups with your care team, treatment appointments, lab visits, and imaging tests. It's important to keep your appointments whenever you can. If you miss any appointments, call your care provider as soon as possible to reschedule your appointment.

Supportive Care to Prevent and Treat Side Effects

Description	Supportive Care Given at the Clinic or Hospital	Supportive Care Taken at Home
To lower the risk of infusion-related reactions	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
To help prevent or treat nausea and vomiting	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Other	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Common Side Effects

Side Effect	Important Information
<p><b>Infusion-Related Reactions (Boxed Warning)</b></p>	<p>Description: Infusion reactions are common with rituximab and can sometimes be severe or life threatening.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your care team will prescribe medicines before each infusion to help decrease your risk for infusion reactions or to help make any infusion reaction less severe.</li> <li>• You will be monitored for infusion reactions during each infusion.</li> <li>• Your care team may slow down or stop your infusion, or completely stop treatment if you have an infusion reaction.</li> </ul> <p>Get medical help right away if you develop any of the following during or after your infusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chills or shaking</li> <li>• Itching, rash, or flushing</li> <li>• Trouble breathing, wheezing, or tongue swelling</li> <li>• Dizziness or feeling faint</li> <li>• Feeling of impending doom</li> <li>• Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher</li> <li>• New or severe pain in your back or neck</li> </ul>
<p>Low White Blood Cell (WBC) Count (Neutropenia) and Increased Risk of Infection</p>	<p>Description: WBCs help protect your body from infections. A low WBC count increases your risk of getting infections.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wash your hands often and bathe regularly.</li> <li>• Avoid crowded places and close contact with people who are sick.</li> <li>• Follow food safety and wound care advice from your care team.</li> <li>• Your care team may prescribe medicine to help your WBCs recover.</li> </ul> <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher</li> <li>• Chills</li> <li>• New or worsening cough or sore throat</li> <li>• Painful urination or signs of a urinary infection</li> <li>• Feeling much more tired than usual</li> <li>• Red, swollen, warm, or painful areas on the skin (possible skin infection)</li> </ul>
<p>Fever and Flu-like Symptoms</p>	<p>Description: Fever and flu-like symptoms often occur after gemcitabine infusions. Symptoms such as fever, chills, fatigue, and muscle aches typically begin within a few hours after the infusion and last about 1 to 2 days.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take your temperature if you feel like you have a fever.</li> <li>• Your care team may recommend medicines to treat your fever.</li> </ul> <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher</li> <li>• Fever lasting for more than 3 days</li> <li>• Any signs of infections, such as a persistent cough, shortness of breath, or pain</li> </ul>

<p>Low Platelet Count (Thrombocytopenia)</p>	<p>Description: Platelets help your blood clot and wounds heal. A low platelet count increases your risk of bruising and bleeding.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blow your nose gently and avoid picking it.</li> <li>• Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush and keep good oral hygiene.</li> <li>• Use an electric razor for shaving and a nail file instead of nail clippers.</li> <li>• Avoid over-the-counter medicines that can increase bleeding risk (for example, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like ibuprofen).</li> <li>• Talk with your care team or dentist before medical or dental procedures — you may need to pause treatment.</li> </ul> <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A nosebleed lasting more than 5 minutes despite pressure</li> <li>• A cut that continues to bleed</li> <li>• Heavy gum bleeding when brushing or flossing</li> <li>• Sudden or severe headache</li> <li>• Blood in your urine or stool</li> <li>• Blood in your spit after coughing</li> </ul>
<p>Low Red Blood Cell (RBC) Count and Hemoglobin (Hgb) (Anemia)</p>	<p>Description: RBCs and Hgb carry oxygen to your body’s tissues and remove carbon dioxide. Low RBC or Hgb (anemia) can make you feel weak, very tired, or look pale.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim for 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night.</li> <li>• Do not drive, operate heavy machinery, or do other dangerous activities if you are very tired.</li> <li>• Balance activity and rest — stay as active as you can, but rest when needed.</li> <li>• Eat a balanced diet and follow any nutrition or supplement advice from your care team.</li> </ul> <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shortness of breath</li> <li>• Dizziness or fainting</li> <li>• Fast or irregular heartbeats</li> <li>• Sudden or severe headache</li> </ul>

<p>Fatigue</p>	<p>Description: Fatigue is a constant and sometimes strong feeling of tiredness.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Routine exercise can help reduce fatigue. Talk with your care team to find the right type and amount of activity for you.</li> <li>• Ask family and friends for help with daily tasks and for emotional support.</li> <li>• Try healthy ways to feel better, such as meditation, journaling, yoga, or guided imagery, to reduce anxiety and improve well-being.</li> <li>• Aim for 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night. Limit daytime naps to help you sleep better at night.</li> <li>• Do not drive, operate heavy machinery, or do other potentially dangerous activities if you are very tired.</li> </ul> <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tiredness that affects your daily life or prevents you from doing normal activities</li> <li>• Tiredness that does not get better with rest</li> <li>• Dizziness or weakness along with severe tiredness</li> </ul>
<p>Nausea and Vomiting</p>	<p>Description: Nausea is an uncomfortable feeling in your stomach or the need to throw up. You may or may not vomit.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat smaller, more frequent meals.</li> <li>• Avoid fatty, fried, spicy, or highly sweet foods.</li> <li>• Eat bland foods at room temperature and drink clear liquids.</li> <li>• If you vomit, start with small sips of water, broth, or other clear liquids. If these stay down, try soft foods (such as gelatin, plain cornstarch pudding, yogurt, strained soup, or strained cooked cereal) and gradually return to solid foods.</li> <li>• Your care team may prescribe medicine for these symptoms.</li> </ul> <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vomiting for more than 24 hours</li> <li>• Nonstop vomiting</li> <li>• Signs of dehydration (very thirsty, dry mouth, dizziness, or dark urine)</li> <li>• Blood or coffee-ground-like appearance in your vomit</li> <li>• Severe stomach pain that does not go away after vomiting</li> </ul>

<p>Diarrhea</p>	<p>Description: Diarrhea is loose, watery stools or more frequent bowel movements than usual. It can cause dehydration and weakness.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep track of how often you go to the bathroom each day.</li> <li>• Drink 8 to 10 glasses of water or other fluids daily, unless your care team tells you otherwise.</li> <li>• Eat small meals of mild, low-fiber foods (such as bananas, applesauce, potatoes, chicken, rice, and toast).</li> <li>• If you have diarrhea, avoid high-fiber foods (such as raw vegetables, fruits, and whole grains), gas-producing foods (such as broccoli and beans), dairy (such as milk and yogurt), and spicy, fried, or greasy foods.</li> <li>• Your care team may recommend an antidiarrheal medicine such as loperamide (Imodium).</li> </ul> <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 or more bowel movements than normal in 24 hours</li> <li>• Dizziness or lightheadedness while having diarrhea</li> <li>• Signs of dehydration (very thirsty, dry mouth, dizziness, or dark urine)</li> <li>• Bloody diarrhea</li> </ul>
<p>Liver Problems</p>	<p>Description: Treatment can cause liver injury. Your care team may check your liver with blood tests before and during treatment.</p> <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yellowing of your skin or the white part of your eyes (jaundice)</li> <li>• Severe nausea or vomiting</li> <li>• Pain on the right side of your stomach area (abdomen)</li> <li>• Dark, tea-colored urine</li> <li>• Bleeding or bruising more easily than normal</li> </ul>
<p>Numbness, Tingling, or Burning in Your Hands or Feet (Peripheral Neuropathy)</p>	<p>Description: Nerve pain and tingling are uncomfortable sensations from nerve damage or irritation. Pain may be sharp, burning, or deep. Tingling can feel like pins-and-needles or mild electric shocks, often in the hands, feet, arms, or legs.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep a daily log of pain and sensations, noting triggers and what helps or makes it worse.</li> <li>• Check your feet every day for cuts, sores, blisters, or color changes, especially if numbness reduces feeling.</li> <li>• Wear comfortable, well-fitting shoes and avoid walking barefoot if sensation is reduced.</li> <li>• Protect hands and feet from extreme heat or cold.</li> <li>• Your care team may recommend or prescribe medicines, topical treatments, physical therapy, or supplements to help with symptoms.</li> </ul> <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New or worsening “pins and needles”, burning, or numbness in your hands or feet</li> <li>• Trouble moving your arms or legs, or weakness</li> <li>• Problems with balance or frequent falls</li> </ul>

<p>Sensitivity to Cold Temperatures</p>	<p>Description: Oxaliplatin can cause increased sensitivity to cold temperatures for several days after treatment (often 3 to 7 days). Cold exposure may cause discomfort, pain, numbness, or tingling in the hands, feet, mouth, or throat.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid cold temperatures and cold objects for several days after treatment.</li> <li>• Do not eat or drink very cold foods or drinks; use a straw for cold liquids if needed.</li> <li>• Wear insulated gloves when handling cold items or reaching into the freezer.</li> <li>• Dress warmly in cold weather and cover your mouth with a scarf to warm inhaled air.</li> <li>• Protect hands and feet from cold exposure (warm socks, mittens, cushioned footwear).</li> </ul> <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severe or persistent pain triggered by cold</li> <li>• Numbness or tingling that worsens or spreads</li> <li>• Trouble performing daily activities because of cold sensitivity</li> <li>• Unusual skin changes (discoloration, sores) after cold exposure</li> <li>• Cold sensitivity lasting longer than 7 days after treatment</li> </ul>
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Select Rare Side Effects

Side Effect	Talk to Your Care Team if You Have Any of These Signs or Symptoms
<p><b>Allergic Reactions, Including Anaphylaxis (Boxed Warning)</b></p>	<p>Get emergency medical help right away if you develop any of the following signs or symptoms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swelling of your lips, mouth, tongue, or throat</li> <li>• Trouble breathing or swallowing</li> <li>• Raised red areas on your skin (hives)</li> <li>• A very fast heartbeat</li> <li>• You feel dizzy or faint</li> </ul>
<p><b>Severe Skin and Mouth Reactions (Boxed Warning)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Painful sores or ulcers on your skin, lips or in your mouth</li> <li>• Blisters</li> <li>• Peeling skin</li> <li>• Rash</li> <li>• Pustules</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) Reactivation (Boxed Warning)</b></p>	<p>Before you receive rituximab, your care team will do blood tests to check for HBV infection. If you have had hepatitis B or are a carrier of hepatitis B virus, receiving rituximab could cause the virus to become an active infection again. Hepatitis B reactivation may cause serious liver problems, including liver failure and death. Your care team will monitor you for hepatitis B infection during and for several months after you stop receiving rituximab.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worsening tiredness</li> <li>• Yellowing of your skin or white part of your eyes</li> </ul>

<p><b>Progressive Multifocal Leukoencephalopathy (PML) (Boxed Warning)</b></p>	<p>PML is a rare, serious brain infection caused by a virus that can happen in people who receive rituximab. People with weakened immune systems can get PML. PML can result in death or severe disability. There is no known treatment, prevention, or cure for PML.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confusion</li> <li>• Dizziness or loss of balance</li> <li>• Difficulty walking or talking</li> <li>• Decreased strength or weakness on one side of your body</li> <li>• Vision problems, such as blurred vision or loss of vision</li> </ul>
<p>Low Immunoglobulin Levels (Hypogammaglobulinemia)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting sick often (like colds or pneumonia)</li> <li>• Taking longer to feel better after being sick</li> <li>• Tiredness or weakness</li> <li>• Skin infections or rashes</li> <li>• Severe stomach-area (abdominal) pain or diarrhea</li> <li>• New or worsening allergies or other immune problems</li> </ul>
<p>Heart Problems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swelling of your stomach area (abdomen), legs, hands, feet, or ankles</li> <li>• Shortness of breath</li> <li>• Nausea or vomiting</li> <li>• New or worsening chest discomfort, including pain or pressure</li> <li>• Weight gain</li> <li>• Pain or discomfort in your arms, back, neck, or jaw</li> <li>• Protruding neck veins</li> <li>• Breaking out in a cold sweat</li> <li>• Feeling lightheaded or dizzy</li> </ul>
<p>Lung Problems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cough</li> <li>• Shortness of breath</li> <li>• Chest pain</li> </ul>
<p>Stomach and Serious Bowel Problems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severe stomach-area (abdominal) pain</li> <li>• Repeated vomiting during treatment</li> </ul>
<p>Kidney Problems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decrease in your amount of urine</li> <li>• Blood in your urine</li> <li>• Swelling of your ankles</li> <li>• Loss of appetite</li> </ul>
<p>Tumor Lysis Syndrome (TLS)</p>	<p>Tumor lysis happens when cancer cells break apart and flood your bloodstream with chemicals and toxins faster than your body can get rid of them. TLS is a group of conditions that affect your heart, kidneys, and muscles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severe nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea</li> <li>• Urinating smaller amounts or having dark-colored urine</li> <li>• Muscle cramps or twitching</li> <li>• Rapid heartbeats or chest pain</li> <li>• Confusion or weakness</li> <li>• Seizures</li> </ul>

<p>Capillary Leak Syndrome (CLS)</p>	<p>CLS happens when fluid and proteins leak from your small blood vessels into surrounding tissues. It requires immediate treatment to prevent a drop in blood pressure and other serious complications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swelling or puffiness and are urinating less than usual</li> <li>• Trouble breathing</li> <li>• Swelling of your stomach area (abdomen) and feeling of fullness</li> <li>• Dizziness or feeling faint</li> <li>• A general feeling of tiredness</li> </ul>
<p>Posterior Reversible Encephalopathy Syndrome (PRES)</p>	<p>A neurologic condition called PRES can happen during treatment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severe headache</li> <li>• Confusion</li> <li>• Weakness</li> <li>• Seizures</li> <li>• Blindness or change in vision</li> </ul>
<p>Thrombotic Microangiopathy (TMA) and Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS)</p>	<p>TMA is a serious condition in which small blood vessels are damaged, leading to blood clots, low platelet counts, and destruction of red blood cells. HUS is a type of TMA that can damage the kidneys and other organs and may lead to life-threatening kidney failure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of color in the skin</li> <li>• Extreme tiredness or weakness</li> <li>• Easy bruising or unusual bleeding (nose, mouth, gums)</li> <li>• Decreased urine output or blood in your urine</li> <li>• Swelling of the legs, feet, or ankles (or swelling of face, hands, full body)</li> <li>• Confusion, seizures, or stroke (weakness, numbness, trouble speaking)</li> <li>• New or worsening high blood pressure</li> </ul>
<p>Severe Muscle Problems (Rhabdomyolysis)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intense muscle pain, tenderness, swelling, stiffness, or weakness (especially in shoulders, thighs, or low back)</li> <li>• Dark red, brown, or tea-colored urine</li> <li>• You urinate less frequently than usual or not at all</li> <li>• Extreme tiredness or confusion</li> <li>• Nausea or vomiting</li> <li>• Fever</li> <li>• Fast heart rate</li> </ul>
<p>Extravasation</p>	<p>Oxaliplatin can cause extravasation. Extravasation happens when medicine that is supposed to go into a vein leaks out into the tissues around it. This can cause pain, swelling, and damage to the skin and tissues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pain, burning, or stinging at the infusion site</li> <li>• Swelling, redness, or blistering around the site</li> <li>• Coolness or numbness in the area</li> <li>• Decreased blood flow or tissue damage, potentially leading to ulcers or tissue death in severe cases</li> </ul>

**Before starting treatment, ask your care team when to call 9-1-1 or seek emergency help. If you experience any new, worsening, or uncontrolled side effects, contact your care team immediately.**

## Intimacy, Fertility, Pregnancy, and Breastfeeding

- Treatment may **change how you feel about intimacy and your body**. However, physical closeness—such as holding hands and hugging—remains safe. It is common to have questions about intimacy. If needed, talk to your care team for guidance.
- Treatment can affect your **ability to have children**. It may damage your reproductive organs or stop them from working. If you are worried about fertility, talk to your care team before starting treatment.
- Treatment may **harm an unborn baby**.
  - If you are able to become pregnant, take a pregnancy test before starting treatment.
  - Use an effective method of birth control during treatment, for 6 months after your last dose of gemcitabine, for 9 months after your last dose of oxaliplatin, and 12 months after your last dose of rituximab.
  - If you think you might be pregnant or if you become pregnant, tell your care team right away.
  - If your partner is able to become pregnant, use an effective method of birth control—such as condoms—during treatment, for 3 months after your last dose of gemcitabine, and for 6 months after your last dose of oxaliplatin.
- **Do NOT breastfeed** during treatment, for 1 week after your last dose of gemcitabine, for 3 months after your last dose of oxaliplatin, and for 6 months after your last dose of rituximab.

## Handling Body Fluids and Waste

Some drugs you receive may stay in your urine, stool, sweat, or vomit for many days after treatment. Because many cancer drugs are toxic, your body waste may also be dangerous to touch. To help protect yourself, your loved ones, and the environment, **follow these instructions** for at least **48 hours** after each dose of **gemcitabine** and for **6 days** after each dose of **oxaliplatin**: (Note: Rituximab does not require special handling of body fluids and waste.)

- People who are pregnant should avoid touching anything that may be soiled with body fluids from the patient.
- You can use your usual toilet. Always close the lid and flush to discard all waste. If you have a low-flow toilet, flush twice.
- If the toilet or seat is soiled with urine, stool, or vomit, clean the surface after each use before others use it.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after using the toilet.
- If you need a bedpan, inform your caregiver so they can wear gloves and assist with cleanup. Wash the bedpan with soap and water daily.
- If you cannot control your bladder or bowels, use a disposable pad with a plastic back, a diaper, or a sheet to absorb waste.
- Wash any skin exposed to body waste with soap and water.
- Wash soiled linens or clothing separately from other laundry. If you don't have a washer, place them in a plastic bag until they can be washed.
- Wash your hands with soap and water after touching soiled linens or clothing.

**Additional Information**

- **Tell your care team about all the medicines you take.**  
This includes prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, and herbal products. Before starting any new medicine, supplement, or vaccine, ask your care team first.
- **Worsening side effects from radiation treatment.**  
Tell your care team if you have had or are planning to receive radiation therapy.
- **This Patient Education Sheet may not describe all possible side effects.**  
Call your care team for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

**Notes**

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Scan the QR code below to access this education sheet.



Important notice: The Association of Cancer Care Centers (ACCC), Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association (HOPA), Network for Collaborative Oncology Development & Advancement, Inc. (NCODA), and Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) have collaborated in gathering information for and developing this patient education guide. This guide represents a brief summary of the medication derived from information provided by the drug manufacturer and other resources.

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PES-302