

Cladribine and Rituximab

Care Team Contact Information: _____

Pharmacy Contact Information: _____

Diagnosis: _____

- This treatment is often used for hairy cell leukemia (HCL). 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

Treatment Name	How the Treatment Works	How the Treatment is Given
Cladribine (KLAD-rih-been)	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). OR Injection under the skin (subcutaneous injection).
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).

Note: Your care team may use 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

Option #1

- Cladribine is given each day for 5 days.
- Rituximab is given 1 time each week for 8 doses.

Option #2

- Cladribine is given each day for 5 days
- Rituximab is given 1 time each week, beginning 1 month after cladribine, for 8 doses.

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 help prevent infusion-related reactions	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
To help lower the risk of infections	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
To lower the risk of Tumor Lysis Syndrome (TLS)	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Other	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Common Side Effects

Side Effect	Important Information
Infusion-Related Reactions (Boxed Warning)	<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"> • Your care team may prescribe medicines before each infusion of rituximab to help decrease your risk for infusion reactions or to help make any infusion reaction less severe. • You may be monitored for infusion reactions during each infusion of rituximab. • Your care team may slow down or stop your infusion or completely stop treatment with rituximab if you have an infusion reaction. <p>Get medical help right away if you develop any of the following symptoms of infusion reaction during or after an infusion of rituximab:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chills or shaking • Itching, rash, or flushing • Trouble breathing or wheezing; tongue swelling • Dizziness or feeling faint • Fever of 100.4°F (or 38°C) or higher • Pain in your back or neck
Low White Blood Cell (WBC) Count (Neutropenia) and Increased Risk of Infection	<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"> • Wash your hands often and bathe regularly. • Avoid crowded places and close contact with people who are sick. • Follow food safety and wound-care advice from your care team. • Your care team may prescribe medicine to help your WBCs recover. <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher • Chills • New or worsening cough or sore throat • Painful urination or signs of a urinary infection • Feeling much more tired than usual • Red, swollen, warm, or painful areas on the skin (possible skin infection)
Low Platelet Count (Thrombocytopenia)	<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"> • Blow your nose gently and avoid picking it. • Brush your teeth with a soft toothbrush and keep good oral hygiene. • Use an electric razor for shaving and a nail file instead of nail clippers. • Avoid over-the-counter medicines that can increase bleeding risk (for example, NSAIDs like ibuprofen). • Tell your care team or dentist before medical or dental procedures — you may need to pause treatment. <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A nosebleed lasting more than 5 minutes despite pressure • A cut that continues to bleed • Heavy gum bleeding when brushing or flossing • Sudden or severe headache • Blood in your urine or stool • Blood in your spit after coughing

<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"> • Aim for 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night. • Do not drive, operate heavy machinery, or do other dangerous activities if you are very tired. • Balance activity and rest — stay as active as you can but rest when needed. • Eat a balanced diet and follow any nutrition or supplement advice from your care team. <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortness of breath • Dizziness or fainting • Fast or irregular heartbeats • Sudden or severe headache
<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"> • Yellowing of your skin or the white part of your eyes (jaundice) • Severe nausea or vomiting • Pain on the right side of your stomach area (abdomen) • Dark, tea-colored urine • Bleeding or bruising more easily than normal

Select Rare Side Effects

Side Effect	Talk to Your Care Team if You Have Any of These Signs or Symptoms	
Severe Skin and Mouth Reactions (Boxed Warning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Painful sores or ulcers on your skin, lips, or in your mouth • Blisters • Peeling skin • Rash • Pustules 	
Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) Reactivation (Boxed Warning)	<p>Before you start treatment, 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. You should not receive rituximab if you have active hepatitis B liver disease. 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"> • Worsening tiredness • Yellowing of your skin or white part of your eyes 	
Progressive Multifocal Leukoencephalopathy (PML) (Boxed Warning)	<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"> • Confusion • Dizziness or loss of balance • Difficulty walking or talking • Decreased strength or weakness on one side of your body • Vision problems 	
Kidney Problems (Boxed Warning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in your amount of urine • Blood in your urine • Swelling of your ankles • Loss of appetite 	
Neurologic Problems (Boxed Warning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gradual or sudden weakness and stiffening in the arms and legs • Trouble with coordination, balance, and mobility • Loss of control of bowel and bladder functions • Tingling, burning, or numbness in the arms and legs • Muscle weakness • Muscle spasms and stiffness 	
Heart Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swelling of your stomach-area (abdomen), legs, hands, feet, or ankles • Shortness of breath • Nausea or vomiting • New or worsening chest discomfort, including pain or pressure • Weight gain • Pain or discomfort in your arms, back, neck, or jaw • Protruding neck veins • Breaking out in a cold sweat • Feeling lightheaded or dizzy 	
Stomach and Serious Bowel Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe stomach-area (abdomen) pain • Repeated vomiting during treatment 	

<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"> • Severe nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea • Urinating smaller amounts or dark-colored urine • Muscle cramps or twitching • Rapid heartbeats or chest pain • Confusion or weakness • Seizures
<p>Risk of New Cancers</p>	<p>There is a risk of developing new cancers during or after treatment. Talk with your care team about this risk, and ask about the signs and symptoms of new cancers.</p>

**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, 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 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 cladribine, and for 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 with cladribine and rituximab and for 6 months after your last dose of cladribine.
- **Do NOT breastfeed** during treatment, for 10 days after your last dose of cladribine, 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 **cladribine**: (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.
- **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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