

High-Dose Cytarabine (HiDAC)

Care Team Contact Information: _____

Pharmacy Contact Information: _____

Diagnosis: _____

- This treatment is often used for acute myeloid leukemia (AML).
- 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
Cytarabine (sy-TAYR-uh-been): Ara-C (ar-uh-SEE) This is also called “high-dose ara-C” or “HiDAC”	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).

Treatment Administration and Schedule

Treatment can either be given as an induction cycle or consolidation cycle.

- Induction is typically given as 1 cycle. Depending on how you respond to treatment, your care team may recommend a second induction cycle.
- Consolidation is typically repeated every 4 to 5 weeks. This length of time is called a “cycle.” A full course of treatment consists of 4 post-remission cycles.

Induction Cycle

- Cytarabine is given 2 times a day on Days 1 to 6.

Treatment Name	Cycle 1								
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	...	Day 28
Cytarabine Morning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Cytarabine Evening	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			

Treatment Administration and Schedule (Continued)

Consolidation Cycle: Option 1

- Cytarabine is given 2 times a day on Days 1, 3, and 5.

Treatment Name	Cycle 1								
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	...	Day 28
Cytarabine Morning	✓		✓		✓				
Cytarabine Evening	✓		✓		✓				

Consolidation Cycle: Option 2

- Cytarabine is given 2 times a day on Days 1 to 3.

Treatment Name	Cycle 1								
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	...	Day 28
Cytarabine Morning	✓	✓	✓						
Cytarabine Evening	✓	✓	✓						

Consolidation Cycle: Option 3

- Cytarabine is given 1 time a day on Days 1 to 5.

Treatment Name	Cycle 1								
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	...	Day 28
Cytarabine Morning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Cytarabine Evening	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				

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 or treat nausea and vomiting		
To help lower the risk of infections		
To help lower the risk of eye problems		
Other		

Common Side Effects

Side Effect	Important Information
Low White Blood Cell (WBC) Count (Neutropenia) and Increased Risk of Infection (Boxed Warning)	Description: WBCs help protect your body from infections. A low WBC count increases your risk of infection. Recommendations: - 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. Talk to your care team if you have: - 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) (Boxed Warning)	Description: Platelets help your blood clot and wounds heal. A low platelet count increases your risk of bruising and bleeding. Recommendations: - Blow your nose gently and avoid picking it. - Brush your teeth gently 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, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like ibuprofen). - Talk with your care team or dentist before medical or dental procedures — you may need to pause treatment. Talk to your care team if you have: - 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
Low Red Blood Cell (RBC) Count and Hemoglobin (Hgb) (Anemia) (Boxed Warning)	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. Recommendations: - 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. Talk to your care team if you have: - Shortness of breath - Dizziness or fainting - Fast or irregular heartbeats - Sudden or severe headache

Mouth Sores or Irritation (Mucositis or Stomatitis)	Description: Treatment can irritate the lining of the mouth. In some cases, this can cause redness, sores, pain, and swelling. Recommendations: • Rinse your mouth after meals and at bedtime; rinse more often if sores develop. • Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush or use a cotton swab after meals. • Use a mild, non-alcohol mouth rinse at least 4 times daily (after meals and at bedtime). Example: 1/8 teaspoon salt + 1/4 teaspoon baking soda in 8 oz warm water. • Avoid acidic, hot, spicy, rough, or crunchy foods and drinks that can irritate your mouth. • Avoid tobacco, alcohol, and alcohol-based mouthwash. • Your care team may prescribe medicines or mouth treatments to help with pain and healing. Talk to your care team if you have: • Painful mouth sores or throat pain • Trouble eating or significant weight loss
Nausea and Vomiting	Description: Nausea is an uncomfortable feeling in your stomach or the need to throw up. You may or may not vomit. Recommendations: • Eat smaller, more frequent meals. • Avoid fatty, fried, spicy, or highly sweet foods. • Eat bland foods at room temperature and drink clear liquids. • 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. • Your care team may prescribe medicine for these symptoms. Talk to your care team if you have: • Vomiting for more than 24 hours • Nonstop vomiting • Signs of dehydration (very thirsty, dry mouth, dizziness, or dark urine) • Blood or coffee-ground-like appearance in your vomit • Severe stomach pain that does not go away after vomiting

Low Appetite	Description: Loss of appetite can lead to weight loss and low energy. Small changes in when and what you eat can help maintain strength and nutrition. Recommendations: • Be as active as you can. Do light physical activity before a meal (check with your care team before starting an exercise program). • Note times of day when your appetite is best and eat your largest meal then. • Eat 5 or 6 small meals or snacks each day. • Choose high-protein foods (beans, chicken, fish, meat, yogurt, tofu, eggs). Eat protein first during meals. • Choose higher-calorie foods (avoid “low-fat”, “fat-free”, or “diet” options when trying to gain/maintain weight). • If you feel full quickly, avoid drinking 30 minutes before a meal and drink liquids between meals; choose calorie-containing drinks rather than diet drinks. • Have a bedtime snack that’s easy to digest (for example, peanut butter and crackers). If you have reflux, wait at least 1 hour before lying down. • Try nutritious beverages (high-protein shakes or smoothies) if solid food is unappealing. • Ask your care team about liquid nutrition supplements and ways to add protein or calories (protein powder, yogurt, ice cream). Talk to your care team if you have: • Unintentional weight loss • Little or no appetite for several days • Excessive tiredness or low energy
Liver Problems	Description: Treatment can cause liver injury. Your care team may check your liver with blood tests before and during treatment. Talk to your care team if you have: • 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

Diarrhea	Description: Diarrhea is loose, watery stools or more frequent bowel movements than usual. It can cause dehydration and weakness. Recommendations: • Keep track of how often you go to the bathroom each day. • Drink 8 to 10 glasses of water or other fluids daily, unless your care team tells you otherwise. • Eat small meals of mild, low-fiber foods (such as bananas, applesauce, potatoes, chicken, rice, and toast). • 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. • Your care team may recommend an antidiarrheal medicine such as loperamide (Imodium). Talk to your care team if you have: • 4 or more bowel movements than normal in 24 hours • Dizziness or lightheadedness while having diarrhea • Signs of dehydration (very thirsty, dry mouth, dizziness, or dark urine) • Bloody diarrhea
Eye Problems	Description: Cytarabine-related eye problems can include blurred vision, eye pain, redness, and sensitivity to light. Patients may also experience dryness or tearing in their eyes. Recommendations: • Your care team may prescribe artificial tears, corticosteroid eye drops, and antihistamines. • Avoid contact lenses during treatment. • Limit sun exposure and use protective eyewear. Talk to your care team if you have: • Eye pain, crusting, or redness • Eye swelling or irritation • Increased tears • Feeling like something is in your eyes • Discharge from your eyes • Sensitivity to light • Blurred vision or vision changes
Hair Loss (Alopecia)	Description: Hair loss or thinning may begin days to weeks after treatment starts and usually grows back later. New growth can be a different color or texture and may not look the same as before. Recommendations: • Consider a short haircut before treatment and use scarves, hats, or wigs for comfort and confidence. • Keep your head covered outdoors to protect it from the sun and cold; use sunscreen on your uncovered scalp. • Use gentle haircare: mild shampoo, soft brush, and avoid heat styling and harsh treatments. • Ask your care team about wig prescriptions or resources for head coverings. Talk to your care team if you have: • No hair regrowth months after treatment ends • Concern about hair changes or need help finding a wig or support resources

Select Rare Side Effects

Side Effect	Talk to Your Care Team if You Have Any of These Signs or Symptoms	
Lung Problems	• Cough • Shortness of breath	• Chest pain or tightness
Brain Problems	• Headache • Dizziness • Confusion • Memory problems • Difficulty concentrating • Fatigue	• Seizures • Muscle weakness • Tremors • Changes in mood or behavior • Sensory disturbances (such as tingling or numbness)
Numbness, Tingling, or Burning in Your Hands or Feet (Peripheral Neuropathy)	• New or worsening “pins and needles,” burning, or numbness in your hands or feet	• Trouble moving your arms or legs or weakness • Problems with balance or frequent falls
Cytarabine Syndrome	• Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher • Chills • Muscle or bone pain	• Severe fatigue • Rash • Eye swelling or irritation

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 may 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 with cytarabine.
 - 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 cytarabine
- **Do NOT breastfeed** during treatment with cytarabine.

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 **cytarabine**:

- 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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