

Cisplatin and Radiation

Care Team Contact Information: _____

Pharmacy Contact Information: _____

Diagnosis: _____

- This treatment is used for head and neck cancer (H&N), cervical cancer, and vulvar cancer.
- 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
Cisplatin (sis-PLA-tin): Platinol (PLA-tih-nol)	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).

Treatment Administration and Schedule

- Cisplatin is given 1 time each week (every 7 days) or 1 time every 3 weeks (21 days).
- Radiation therapy is typically given 1 time a day, 5 days a week.
- Talk with your care team about your exact treatment schedule and to find out which days you will have radiation therapy.

☐ **Option #1:** Cisplatin Every 7 Days with Radiation Therapy

- Note: This schedule assumes a Monday start date and 5 treatment days of radiation. Your schedule may look different.

Treatment Name	Cycle 1							Next Cycle
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 1
Cisplatin	✓							✓
Radiation Therapy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓

Treatment Administration and Schedule (Continued)

☐ **Option #2:** Cisplatin Every 3 Weeks with Radiation Therapy

- Note: This schedule assumes a Monday start date and 15 treatment days of radiation. Your schedule may look different.

Treatment Name	Cycle 1, Days																					Next Cycle, Day
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	1
Cisplatin	✓																					✓
Radiation Therapy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓

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 an appointment, call your care team as soon as possible to reschedule it.

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		
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
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

Nausea and Vomiting (Boxed Warning)	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 in your vomit or vomit that looks like coffee grounds • Severe stomach pain that does not go away after vomiting
Kidney Problems (Boxed Warning)	Description: Treatment can cause kidney problems, including damage to the kidneys and decreased kidney function. This may lead to acute kidney injury or long-term kidney failure. It can also cause low magnesium levels that last after treatment. These issues usually happen within days of getting the drug. Recommendations: • Drink 8 to 10 glasses of water or other fluids each day, unless your care team tells you otherwise. • Your care team will give you fluids and electrolytes with your treatment. Talk to your care team if you have: • Decrease in your amount of urine • Blood in your urine • Swelling of your ankles • Loss of appetite
Numbness, Tingling, or Burning in Your Hands or Feet (Peripheral Neuropathy) (Boxed Warning)	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. Recommendations: • Keep a daily log of pain and sensations, noting triggers and what helps or makes it worse. • Check your feet every day for cuts, sores, blisters, or color changes, especially if numbness reduces feeling. • Wear comfortable, well-fitting shoes and avoid walking barefoot if sensation is reduced. • Protect hands and feet from extreme heat or cold. • Your care team may recommend or prescribe medicines, topical treatments, physical therapy, or supplements to help with symptoms. Talk to your care team if you have: • 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

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

Select Rare Side Effects

Side Effect	Talk to Your Care Team if You Have Any of These Signs or Symptoms	
Hearing Loss	- New or worsening hearing loss - Ringing, buzzing, or other noises in your ears (tinnitus)	- Trouble understanding speech or needing higher volume on devices - Dizziness or balance problems
Eye Problems	- Dry or red eyes - Eye pain or swelling - Vision changes	- Increased tears - Sensitivity to light - Blurred vision
Hair Loss (Alopecia)	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.	
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. Cisplatin may cause extravasation. - Pain, burning, or stinging at the infusion site - Swelling, redness, or blistering around the site - Coolness or numbness in the area - Decreased blood flow or tissue damage, potentially leading to ulcers or tissue death in severe cases	
Infusion-Related Reactions	Your care team may slow or temporarily stop the infusion if you have a reaction. Treatment may be permanently stopped for a severe reaction. - Chills or shaking - Itching, rash, or flushing - Trouble breathing, wheezing, or tongue swelling - Dizziness or feeling faint - Feeling of impending doom - Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher - New or severe pain in your back or neck	
Risk of New Cancers	There is a risk of developing one or more new cancers during or after treatment. Talk with your care team about this risk, and ask about the signs and symptoms to watch for.	

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:
 - Your care team will verify your pregnancy status before treatment.
 - Use an effective method of birth control during treatment and for 14 months after your last dose of cisplatin.
 - 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 and for 11 months after your last dose of cisplatin.
- **Do not breastfeed** during treatment with cisplatin.

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 **cisplatin**. Your care team may have additional precautions to take while receiving radiation therapy.

- 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

Updated Date: September 22, 2026

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 to gather information and develop this patient education guide. This guide is a summary of the medication, based on information provided by the drug manufacturer and other sources.

This guide does not cover all information available on the possible uses, directions, doses, precautions, warnings, interactions, adverse effects, or risks associated with this medication. It should not be used as a substitute for the advice of a qualified healthcare professional. The provision of this guide is for informational purposes only. It does not constitute or imply endorsement, recommendation, or favoring of this medication by ACCC, HOPA, NCODA, or ONS, who assume no liability for and cannot ensure the accuracy of the information presented. All decisions regarding this medication should be made with the guidance and direction of a qualified healthcare professional.

Permission:

Patient Education Sheets are provided as a free educational resource for patients with cancer and their caregivers in need of concise, easy-to-understand information about cancer therapy. Healthcare providers may copy and distribute the sheets to patients and direct them to the Patient Education Sheets website. However, commercial reproduction or reuse, as well as rebranding or reposting of any type, are strictly prohibited without permission of the copyright holders. Permission requests, including direct linking from Electronic Health Records, and licensing inquiries should be emailed to patienteducationsheets@ncoda.org.

Copyright © 2026 by Network for Collaborative Oncology Development & Advancement, Inc. All rights reserved.

PES-684