

Cisplatin

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| Names | Cisplatin (SIS-pla-tin) is the generic drug name. Platinol® and Platinol-AQ® are brand names. (There may be other names for this medication.) |
| Why is Cisplatin Given? | Cisplatin treats many cancers including cancer of the ovaries, testicles, bladder, head and neck, lung, cervix, esophagus, and brain, among others. |
| How is it Administered? | Cisplatin is infused into a vein (intravenously /IV), usually over 6-8 hours, after IV fluids and anti-nausea medications have been given. Talk to your doctor or nurse about how long you should plan to be in the chemoinfusion center for each treatment. The infusion is usually given once every 3-4 weeks. (Cisplatin may be infused directly the abdominal cavity, which is called intraperitoneal chemotherapy.) |
| How Does Cisplatin Work? | <p>Cancers are diseases in which abnormal cells reproduce uncontrollably. Your chemo schedule is based upon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• your cancer type and how fast the cancer cells reproduce• the phase of the cell cycle when the chemo is most effective – the resting, growing, or reproduction phases <p>With these factors in mind, your doctors create a chemo schedule to give each medication when it will do the most damage to the cancer cells.</p> <p>Cisplatin is in a class of drugs known as platinum-containing compounds (metal salt) and it is an alkylating agent. It works against the cancer cells while they are in the “resting phase” and slows or stops the cells’ growth.</p> <p>Many chemo medications identify and attack cancer cells because they reproduce quickly. Unfortunately, chemotherapy does not know the difference between cancer cells and normal cells that reproduce quickly. The cells that line the digestive tract (mouth, stomach, intestines) and hair follicles, and your blood cells are more likely to be affected. These normal cells will eventually grow back and be healthy. During treatment, however, you may experience side effects such as nausea, hair loss, and low blood counts. Low blood counts may cause fatigue, anemia, and a significant decrease in your ability to fight off infections.</p> |

What Should I Tell My Doctor Before I Begin Cisplatin?

Tell your doctor if you:

- are allergic to cisplatin, carboplatin, or anything that contains platinum
- have or have ever had kidney disease or hearing problems
- are taking aminoglycoside antibiotics such as amikacin, gentamicin, or tobramycin
- are pregnant or breastfeeding

This drug may interact with other medications or cause harmful side effects. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all prescription or over-the-counter medications, vitamins, herbal, or diet supplements that you are taking.

What Are Some Possible Side Effects?

- Low blood counts - low levels of white blood cells, red blood cells, and/or platelets, which can increase your risk for infection, fatigue, and/or bleeding
- Nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, hiccups
- Diarrhea
- Numbness, tingling in arms and legs (peripheral neuropathy)
- Hair loss
- Ringing in the ears, high frequency hearing loss
- Changes in the taste of foods, metallic taste in your mouth
- Loss of sexual function (men), decreased fertility (men and women)
- Fatigue

How Can I Manage These Side Effects?

- To help avoid infections, stay away from people with colds or other infections. Wash your hands often. Talk to your doctor before you have any vaccinations, such as a flu shot.
- If you are fatigued, take rests during the day, limit your activities, and do an activity at a time of day when you feel a bit more energetic. Learn to ask for and accept help with household and daily chores.
- Be careful when handling sharp objects. Avoid rough sports or other situations that could cause bruising or injury. Use an electric razor.
- Ask your doctor about medication to help prevent or lessen nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.
- Drink at least 2-3 quarts of fluid, especially water, every 24 hours, unless your doctor tells you to limit your fluids. This is particularly important for the first 24 hours after receiving cisplatin.
- Vaginal lubricants can be used to lessen vaginal dryness, itching, and painful intercourse.

- Mouth care is very important. To minimize mouth problems, rinse your mouth with a mixture of ½ teaspoon of baking soda in 8 ounces of water after every meal and at bedtime. Brush your teeth and gums often with a soft toothbrush. (Soften it further by running it under warm water). Avoid smoking, alcohol, and mouthwashes that contain alcohol.

When Should I
Call the
Doctor?

Call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency room if you feel you are in a life-threatening situation or have signs of a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis): Difficulty breathing; wheezing; shortness of breath; swelling of face, throat, or tongue; feeling that your throat is closing; heart palpitations; nausea and vomiting; or your skin looks gray or blue. Please let us know if you go to the emergency room or are admitted to the hospital.

Call your doctor immediately if you have:

- **any sign of infection: fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, chills, cough, sore throat, pain or burning upon urination; redness or tenderness along a vein, at an IV site, or at any other wound or skin irritation**
- any sign of kidney problems: decreased urination, swelling of face, arms, hands, feet, or legs; unusual weakness or fatigue
- any sign of hearing loss: ringing in the ears, trouble hearing, dizziness
- unusual bruising or bleeding: bleeding lasts more than 10-15 minutes or that causes dizziness; black or bloody stools; vomit that is bloody or that looks like coffee grounds; blood in your urine or phlegm /mucus, unusually heavy menstrual bleeding, spontaneous bleeding from your gums or nose, or superficial bleeding into the skin that appears as a rash of pinpoint-sized reddish-purple spots (petechiae)
- numbness and tingling in legs, feet, arms, hands (peripheral neuropathy)
- a feeling like an electric shock when you bend your neck forward

Call your doctor as soon as possible if you have:

- nausea, or mouth pain not relieved by prescribed medication or that prevents you from eating/drinking
- clumsiness in buttoning clothes, opening jars, or other routine activities
- changes in vision
- extreme fatigue
- weight gain of 5 pounds or more in 1 week

What Else Do I Need to Know About Cisplatin?

- Continue to drink plenty of fluids because this drug can irritate your kidneys. This precaution is especially important if you have had chemotherapy before.
- Cisplatin may cause abnormal blood test results such as low magnesium, calcium, and/or potassium levels or high liver function tests (LFTs)
- Avoid sun exposure. Wear sunblock with SPF 30 or higher and protective clothing when you are outside.
- Do not become pregnant or father a child while taking cisplatin. Use a barrier method of contraception such as condoms. Cisplatin may be hazardous to a fetus.
- Cisplatin may permanently affect your ability to have children. If you may want to have children in the future, discuss this with your doctor before starting treatment.
- Your doctor will order tests to monitor your hearing before and during treatment, since hearing loss can be permanent.
- Keep all appointments with your doctor and the laboratory. Tell your doctor about any side effects you are having.
- You should know that cisplatin has been associated with the development of other types of cancers. Talk with your doctor about the potential risk of developing a new cancer.
- If you would like more information about cisplatin, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.