**Patient Education**

**Rituximab (ri-TUK-si-mab)**

**Other Names**
Rituxan®

**How is it Administered?**
Rituximab is usually given by infusion into a vein (intravenous or IV injection). It must be given slowly and it may take several hours or more to receive your first dose. You may receive your medication more quickly during subsequent doses, depending on how you respond.

**Why Am I Taking Rituximab?**
This medication is used to treat some types of non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma.

**How Does it Work?**
Rituximab is a type of targeted therapy, rather than traditional chemotherapy. Specifically, it is a monoclonal antibody.

Cancer is a group of diseases in which abnormal cells multiply without control. Traditional chemotherapy agents identify cancer cells by their rapid rate of multiplication— and then attack those cells. Unfortunately, it also attacks normal cells that multiply quickly.

Targeted therapy identifies other differences between normal cells and cancer cells, and then uses that difference to attack the cancer cells.

Rituximab works like your body’s natural antibodies – by recognizing and attaching to a specific antigen (CD20) on the surface of normal and cancerous B-cells. B-cells are a type of white blood cell. The antibody-antigen attachment signals your immune system to destroy that cell. Stem cells (immature cells in your bone marrow) do not have CD 20, so they are not affected by rituximab. These stem cells can mature and replace the B-cells destroyed by the rituximab.