

Immunotherapy 'Rescue Pack'



What is this and why do I need it?

We have given you this 'Rescue Pack' because you are on an anti-cancer treatment known as immunotherapy.

Immunotherapy activates your immune system and boosts your body's natural ability to fight cancer.

As discussed with your consultant, immunotherapy can confuse your immune system and cause it to recognise some healthy tissues as a threat. This may result in side effects that can be dangerous if left untreated.

What should I look out for?

If you are worried about any side effect, it's important to discuss with the team in the Sunrise Centre. Minor things can be discussed with your Oncology doctor or Clinical Nurse Specialist at the time of your review.

Please call the 24 hour advice line on **07833 057 447** if you experience more serious side effects. Anything new that is troubling you could be important, but we ask you especially to look out for:

- fevers (high temperature above 37.5)
- a rash covering a third of your body or more, or one that is causing significant life impacting symptoms such as:
 - constant itching
 - bleeding, oozing
 - blisters
 - pain
- tummy upset causing you to have:
 - diarrhoea (loose or watery stools) more than 4 times in a day, with or without blood or mucous in your stool
 - new pain in your tummy that is not normal for you
- a yellowing of your skin or itchiness all over without a rash

- new breathing symptoms such as:
 - shortness of breath
 - worsening ability to exert yourself
 - pain in your chest when breathing deeply or coughing firmly
 - a new constant cough.

How will this pack help?

Early detection and treatment of side effects can improve the effectiveness of treatment. This pack is designed to avoid delay in treating any serious side effects that you may experience.

It is essential that you do not take any of these medications without first discussing your symptoms with either your Cancer Nurse Specialist or your cancer doctors. Our team will tell you which to take.

Why do I need to contact my healthcare team before taking any medications?

Sometimes the symptoms listed above can be caused by things other than the immunotherapy you have received. If medications from this pack are taken for reasons other than a side effect of your immunotherapy, they could cause you harm. Your healthcare team will help to determine whether the symptoms you are experiencing are because of your immunotherapy or because of something else and can direct you to take your medications safely.

What is in my pack?

The pack contains three days' supply of:

Prednisolone 60mg – a steroid tablet that helps to 'calm down' your immune system. It has a number of side effects and if taken when suffering from an infection it can cause it to become more severe.

Take 60mg (TWELVE (12) tablets) in the morning with food, unless directed otherwise.

Omeprazole 20mg – a 'Proton Pump Inhibitor', used to reduce the amount of acid the stomach produces. This helps to protect it from the side effects of steroids.

Take ONE (1) capsule in the morning with food, unless directed otherwise.

Aveeno (emollient) – a 'barrier' cream, used to protect and moisturise the skin should it become flaky or irritated.

Apply liberally to the affected 3-4 times a day, or as required.

Betamethasone – a strong steroid cream used to quieten down any particularly irritating rashes or skin reactions. Do not use this on your face unless directed otherwise.

Apply 1-2 times a day to the affected area.

Cetirizine 10mg – a non-drowsy antihistamine designed to reduce any itchiness of the skin you may experience.

Take ONE (1) tablet in the morning with food.

Loperamide 2mg – acts to slow down the motility of your bowel, helping to control symptoms of diarrhoea. **ONLY TAKE THIS IF YOU ARE TOLD TO.**

Take 4mg initially and then 2mg for every loose bowel motion after that.

A stool sample pot with a relevant investigation form will also be provided should you experience any diarrhoea so that you can collect a sample and we can investigate it further. Once you have produced a sample please deliver it to your General Practitioner with the investigation form.

What happens next?

If you have been advised to take medications from this package we will want to review you in person to confirm our diagnosis, ensure that the treatment is working, and to potentially give you further treatment. Please arrange a time for this when contacting us.

Any questions?

This information leaflet should contain all the relevant information that you need but if you have any questions please contact your medical team.

If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version or in another language, please contact the General Office on 01872 252690

