



Fortuneswell Outpatients Unit

Receiving Subcutaneous Trastuzumab Injection

The Treatment

Herceptin (trastuzumab) is given for the treatment of patients with HER2-positive breast cancer. Your Consultant has prescribed it as a subcutaneous injection. This is an injection given into the fatty layer under the skin.

The injection will be given in alternate thighs, just under the skin, where it will be slowly absorbed.

It is administered every three weeks, for a maximum of one year (17 cycles), in early breast cancer, and longer for metastatic disease.

If a dose is delayed by more than three weeks, it must be administered as soon as possible, and then subsequent injections should be scheduled from that date.

Regular Tests

You will need an Echocardiogram (Echo) before starting treatment, a painless ultrasound which tells us how well the heart muscles and valves are working. You will need to have an Echo every three months, together with a blood test, to monitor your kidney and liver function during treatment.

The Injection

After your first injection, you will be observed for six hours. This is to ensure you do not have a reaction. It can take two to five minutes to give the injection.

Signs of Hypersensitivity Reaction to Herceptin subcutaneous injection:

- Shortness of breath
- Rapid heartbeat (tachycardia)
- Itching, rash or all.

Following the second injection, you are required to be observed for two hours.

The Consultant Oncologists at Dorset County Hospital are in agreement that it is not necessary to have the observation period after subsequent treatments, providing you have **not** shown signs of hypersensitivity.

Delayed Reaction

It is possible to experience a delayed reaction up to several hours following the injection, although this is uncommon.

Should you experience shortness of breath, palpitations or difficulty in swallowing, you must call the emergency services on 999.

Outreach Clinics

Depending on where you live, you may be able to receive your treatment closer to home rather than coming into hospital? However, you will need to receive two doses in hospital before administration in the community.

Contact Numbers:

We hope that you have found this information useful. If you have any questions or are worried about anything, please speak to the following Dorset County Hospital Staff:

The Fortuneswell Outpatient Unit

Tracey Turnbull: Senior Sister
Lizzie Charnley: Receptionist/Ward Clerk

Tel: 01305 254359
Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm

Please leave a message on our 24-hour answerphone and we will return your call during the above hours.

Please do not leave emergency messages on this number.

Should you become unwell, please contact the 24-hour emergency telephone number:

Acute Oncology Service 01305 255995

About this leaflet:

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Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy
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If you have feedback regarding the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet, or if you would like a list of references used to develop this leaflet, please email pals@dchft.nhs.uk



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