

# Docetaxel

**Care Team Contact Information:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Pharmacy Contact Information:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Diagnosis:** \_\_\_\_\_

- This treatment is used for many types of cancer.

**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
Docetaxel (DOH-seh-TAK-sil): Taxotere (TAK-soh-teer)	Slows down or stops the growth of cancer cells by preventing cancer cells from properly dividing and creating new cells.	Infusion given into a vein.

**Treatment Administration and Schedule:** Treatment is typically repeated every 3 weeks. This length of time is called a “cycle”.

- Docetaxel is often used in combination with other treatments.
- Your schedule may look different. Talk with your care team about your treatment schedule.

Treatment Name	Cycle 1								Next Cycle
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	...	Day 21	Day 1
Docetaxel	✓								✓

**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 any appointments, call your care provider as soon as possible to reschedule your appointment.

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	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
To help lower the risk of infusion reactions and fluid retention	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
Other	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>

## Common Side Effects

Side Effect	Important Information
<b>Swollen Lower Legs or Hands (Boxed Warning)</b>	<p>Description: Swelling and fluid retention can occur in different areas of the body, like the legs or hands. You might notice areas feel puffy or tighter than usual.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep a daily log of swelling and note any changes in size or location.</li> <li>Elevate swollen limbs when resting.</li> <li>Limit salt intake.</li> <li>Stay active with regular, gentle exercises.</li> <li>Avoid prolonged periods of sitting or standing without movement.</li> </ul> <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swelling that suddenly worsens or spreads to other areas</li> <li>Pain, redness, or warmth in the affected area</li> <li>Signs of shortness of breath or difficulty breathing</li> <li>Swelling is persistent and does not improve with home management</li> <li>Unexpected weight gain</li> </ul> <p>Note: Your care team may ask you to contact them if your weight increases by a certain amount over a certain time period.</p>
<b>Infusion Reactions (Boxed Warning)</b>	<p>Description: An infusion reaction is a bad response that happens during or not long after getting medicine into a vein.</p> <p>Get medical help right away if you develop any of the following symptoms of infusion reaction during or after your infusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chills or shaking</li> <li>Itching, rash, or flushing</li> <li>Trouble breathing or wheezing; tongue-swelling</li> <li>Dizziness or feeling faint</li> <li>Fever of 100.4°F (or 38°C) or higher</li> <li>Pain in your back or neck</li> </ul>
<b>Low White Blood Cell (WBC) Count and Increased Risk of Infection</b>	<p>Description: WBCs help protect the body against infections. If you have a low WBC count, you may be at a higher risk of infection.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wash your hands and bathe regularly.</li> <li>Avoid crowded places.</li> <li>Stay away from people who are sick.</li> <li>Your care team may prescribe a drug that promotes the growth of WBCs.</li> </ul> <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fever of 100.4 °F (38°C) or higher</li> <li>Chills</li> <li>Cough</li> <li>Sore throat</li> <li>Painful urination</li> <li>Tiredness that is worse than normal</li> <li>Skin infections (red, swollen, or painful areas)</li> </ul>

Low Red Blood Cell (RBC) Count and Hemoglobin (Hgb)	<p>Description: RBCs and Hgb help bring oxygen to your body's tissues and take away carbon dioxide. If you have low RBC counts or Hgb, you may feel weak, tired, or look pale.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night.</li> <li>• Avoid operating heavy machinery when tired.</li> <li>• Balance work and rest, staying active but resting when needed.</li> </ul> <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shortness of breath</li> <li>• Dizziness</li> <li>• Fast or abnormal heartbeats</li> <li>• Severe headache</li> </ul>
Fatigue	<p>Description: Fatigue is a constant and sometimes strong feeling of tiredness.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Routine exercise has been shown to decrease levels of fatigue. Work with your care team to find the right type of exercise for you.</li> <li>• Ask your family and friends for help with daily tasks and emotional support.</li> <li>• Try healthy ways to feel better, like meditation, writing in a journal, doing yoga, and using guided imagery to lower anxiety and feel good.</li> <li>• Make a regular sleep schedule and limit naps during the day so you can sleep better at night, aiming for 7 to 8 hours of sleep.</li> <li>• Don't use heavy machines or do things that need your full attention if you're very tired to avoid accidents.</li> </ul> <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tiredness that affects your daily life</li> <li>• Tiredness all the time, and it doesn't get better with rest</li> <li>• Dizziness and weakness, along with being tired</li> </ul>
Mouth Irritation and Sores	<p>Description: Docetaxel can irritate the lining of the mouth. In some cases, this can cause redness, sores, pain, and swelling.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rinse your mouth after meals and at bedtime, and more often if sores develop.</li> <li>• Brush your teeth with a soft toothbrush or cotton swab after meals.</li> <li>• Use a mild, non-alcohol mouth rinse at least four times daily (after meals and at bedtime). A simple mixture is 1/8 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon baking soda in 8 ounces of warm water.</li> <li>• Avoid acidic, hot, spicy, or rough foods and drinks that may irritate your mouth.</li> <li>• Avoid tobacco, alcohol, and alcohol-based mouthwashes.</li> <li>• Your care team may prescribe medicine for these symptoms.</li> </ul> <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pain or sores in your mouth or throat</li> </ul>

Nausea and Vomiting	<p>Description: Nausea is an uncomfortable feeling in your stomach or the need to throw up. This may or may not cause vomiting.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat smaller, more frequent meals.</li> <li>• Avoid fatty, fried, spicy, or highly sweet foods.</li> <li>• Eat bland foods at room temperature and drink clear liquids.</li> <li>• If you vomit, start with small amounts of water, broth, or other clear liquids when you are ready to eat again. If that stays down, then try soft foods (such as gelatin, plain cornstarch pudding, yogurt, strained soup, or strained cooked cereal). Slowly work up to eating solid food.</li> <li>• Your care team may prescribe medicine for these symptoms.</li> </ul> <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vomiting for more than 24 hours</li> <li>• Vomiting that's nonstop</li> <li>• Signs of dehydration (like feeling very thirsty, having a dry mouth, feeling dizzy, or having dark urine)</li> <li>• Blood or coffee-ground-like appearance in your vomit</li> <li>• Bad stomach pain that doesn't go away after vomiting</li> </ul>
Diarrhea	<p>Description: Diarrhea is when you have loose, watery bowel movements more often than usual. The need to use the bathroom may occur urgently.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep track of how many times you go to the bathroom each day.</li> <li>• Drink 8 to 10 glasses of water or other fluids every day, unless your care team tells you otherwise.</li> <li>• Eat small meals of mild, low-fiber foods like bananas, applesauce, potatoes, chicken, rice, and toast.</li> <li>• Avoid eating foods with high fiber (like raw vegetables, fruits, and whole grains), foods that cause gas (like broccoli and beans), dairy foods (like yogurt and milk), and spicy, fried, and greasy foods.</li> <li>• Your care team may recommend medicine (such as loperamide) for diarrhea.</li> </ul> <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 or more bowel movements than normal in 24 hours</li> <li>• Dizziness or lightheadedness while having diarrhea</li> <li>• Bloody diarrhea</li> </ul>
Nerve Problems in Your Arms, Hands, Legs, or Feet	<p>Description: Nerve pain and tingling are uncomfortable sensations caused by nerve damage or irritation. Pain may be sharp, burning, or deep, while tingling feels like pins-and-needles or mild electric shocks, often in the hands, feet, arms, or legs.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track your pain levels, sensations, and any triggers or factors that make the pain worse or better.</li> <li>• Check your feet daily for any injuries or changes, especially if you have numbness or tingling that affects your feeling.</li> <li>• Your care team may prescribe or recommend medicine for symptoms.</li> </ul> <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Pins and needles" or burning feeling in your hands or feet</li> <li>• Trouble moving your arms or legs</li> <li>• Trouble keeping your balance</li> </ul>

Skin Problems	<p>Description: Treatment can cause a rash with itchy, dry, red, or puffy skin.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a warm (not hot) bath or shower every day with mild, unscented soap or body wash.</li> <li>• Pat skin dry (instead of rubbing) with a towel.</li> <li>• Use unscented lotion or moisturizing cream immediately after showering to prevent cracking.</li> <li>• Use lip balm for dry or chapped lips.</li> <li>• Avoid activities that put you at risk for cuts, injuries or burns.</li> <li>• Use an electric shaver, not a razor, to prevent cuts.</li> <li>• Rinse cuts and scrapes immediately under running water and remove any debris from the wound. Wash the skin around the wound with soap. To avoid irritation, do not use soap on the wound. If you have a low platelet count and are at risk for bleeding issues, ask your care team how to care for cuts.</li> <li>• Avoid direct sun when possible. Wear a broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher and reapply every 2 hours.</li> <li>• Use unscented, gentle laundry detergent. Some laundry detergents can irritate sensitive skin.</li> <li>• Your care team may recommend medicine for skin problems.</li> </ul> <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skin rash</li> <li>• Raised red bumps</li> <li>• Redness of the skin</li> <li>• Very dry skin that may affect the mucous membranes (such as mouth and eyes)</li> </ul>
Nail Problems	<p>Description: Nails may become more brittle, thinner, and could change color during treatment.</p> <p>Description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep your fingernails and toenails trimmed short.</li> <li>• Wear cotton gloves when working. When cleaning or washing dishes, use cotton-lined rubber gloves to keep your hands from becoming dry and irritated. Do not use unlined rubber gloves because they seal in sweat and irritate the skin.</li> <li>• Avoid manicures, pedicures and artificial nails, which may increase the risk of infection.</li> <li>• Do not bite your nails or pick at your cuticles.</li> <li>• Nail polish can help strengthen and may protect nails. To take off polish, use "oily" remover to prevent drying.</li> <li>• Soak your hands in natural oils (such as olive oil), to relieve dryness.</li> <li>• Wear loose-fitting shoes with cushioned cotton socks.</li> </ul> <p>Talk to your care team if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pain related to nail changes</li> <li>• Fingernails or toenails that separate from the nail bed</li> </ul>

Hair Loss	<p>Description: Hair loss or hair thinning can start days to a few weeks after treatment begins, but it usually grows back later. It might be a different texture or color when it comes back and may not look the same as before.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You can wear scarves, hats, or wigs, and think about getting a short haircut before treatment.</li> <li>Keep your head covered to protect it from the sun and keep it warm.</li> <li>If your scalp isn't covered outside, remember to put sunscreen on it.</li> </ul> <p>Talk to your care team if you would like a wig prescription.</p>
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### Select Rare Side Effects

Side Effect	Talk to Your Care Team if You Have Any of These Signs or Symptoms
Eye Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dry or red eyes</li> <li>Eye pain or swelling</li> <li>Vision changes</li> <li>Increased tears</li> <li>Sensitivity to light</li> <li>Blurred vision</li> </ul>
Liver Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yellowing of your skin or the whites of your eyes</li> <li>Severe nausea or vomiting</li> <li>Pain on the right side of your stomach area (abdomen)</li> <li>Dark urine (tea colored)</li> <li>Bleeding or bruising more easily than normal</li> </ul>
Risk of New Cancers	<p>There is a risk of developing new cancers during or after treatment. Talk with your care team about this risk, and ask about the signs and symptoms of new cancers.</p>
Extravasation	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pain, burning, or stinging at the infusion site</li> <li>Swelling, redness, or blistering around the site</li> <li>Coolness or numbness in the area</li> <li>Decreased blood flow or tissue damage, potentially leading to ulcers or tissue death in severe cases</li> </ul>

**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, 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 may **harm an unborn baby**.
  - If you are able to become pregnant, take a pregnancy test before starting treatment.
  - Use an effective method of birth control during treatment and for 2 months after your last dose.
  - If you think you might be pregnant or if you become pregnant, tell your care team right away.
  - If your partner(s) could become pregnant, use an effective method of birth control—such as condoms—during treatment and for 4 months after your last dose.
- **Do NOT breastfeed** during treatment and for 1 week after your last dose.

### 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 **3 days** after each dose of **docetaxel**:

- 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 healthcare provider for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.



## Notes

Updated Date: January 16, 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 in gathering information for and developing this patient education guide. This guide represents a brief summary of the medication derived from information provided by the drug manufacturer and other resources.

This guide does not cover all existing information related to the possible uses, directions, doses, precautions, warnings, interactions, adverse effects, or risks associated with this medication and should not substitute for the advice of a qualified healthcare professional. Provision of this guide is for informational purposes only and 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 related to taking this medication should be made with the guidance and under the direction of a qualified healthcare professional.

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