

Cetuximab plus Radiation Therapy

Care Team Contact Information: _____

Pharmacy Contact Information: _____

Diagnosis: _____

- This treatment is often used for head and neck cancer. It may also be used for other reasons.

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
Cetuximab (seh-TUK-sih-mab): Erbitux (ER-bih-tux)	Slows down or stops cancer growth by blocking a specific protein that cancer cells need to survive.	Infusion into a vein (intravenous (IV) infusion).

Treatment Administration and Schedule

- Cetuximab is given 1 time each week.
- Radiation therapy is typically given 1 time a day, 5 days a week.
- Talk with your care team about your exact treatment schedule.

Example Calendar (Note: Your schedule may look different.)

Treatment Name	Cycle 1							Next Cycle
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 1
Cetuximab	✓							✓
Radiation Therapy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓

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 infusion-related reactions		
To help lower the risk of skin problems		
To help prevent or treat nausea and vomiting		
Other		

Common Side Effects

Side Effect	Important Information
Infection	Description: You may have a higher risk of infection during treatment. Recommendations: • Wash your hands and bathe regularly. • Avoid crowded places. • Stay away from people who are sick. Talk to your care team if you have: • Fever of 100.4 °F (38°C) or higher • Chills • Cough • Sore throat • Painful urination • Tiredness that is worse than normal • Skin infections (red, swollen, or painful areas)
Fatigue	Description: Fatigue is a constant and sometimes strong feeling of tiredness. Recommendations: • Routine exercise has been shown to decrease levels of fatigue. Work with your care team to find the right type of exercise for you. • Ask your family and friends for help with daily tasks and emotional support. • Try healthy ways to feel better, like meditation, journaling, yoga, and guided imagery, to lower anxiety and feel good. • Establish a regular sleep schedule and limit daytime naps to help you sleep better at night, aiming for 7 to 8 hours of sleep. • Don't use heavy machinery or do anything that requires your full attention if you're very tired to avoid accidents. Talk to your care team if you have: • Tiredness that affects your daily life • Tiredness all the time, and it doesn't get better with rest • Dizziness and weakness, along with being tired
Lung Problems	Description: Lung problems, such as cough, are common with treatment. More serious lung problems, such as lung inflammation, are less common. Recommendations: • Track your symptoms of shortness of breath, cough, and fatigue. • Stay active with gentle exercise as tolerated. • Avoid irritants like smoke and strong odors. • Stay hydrated to keep mucus thin. Talk to your care team if you have: • Trouble breathing • Chest pain or tightness • Cough

Mouth Irritation and Sores (Mucositis or Stomatitis)	Description: This treatment can irritate the lining of the mouth. In some cases, this can cause redness, sores, pain, and swelling. Recommendations: • Rinse your mouth after meals and at bedtime, and more often if sores develop. • Brush your teeth with a soft toothbrush or a cotton swab after each meal. • 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. • Avoid acidic, hot, spicy, or rough foods and drinks that may irritate your mouth. • Avoid tobacco, alcohol, and alcohol-based mouthwashes. • Your care team may prescribe medicine for these symptoms. Talk to your care team if you have: • Pain or sores in your mouth or throat
Nausea and Vomiting	Description: Nausea is an uncomfortable feeling in your stomach or the need to throw up. This may or may not cause vomiting. Recommendations: • Eat smaller, more frequent meals. • Avoid fatty, fried, spicy, or highly sweet foods. • Eat bland foods at room temperature and drink clear liquids. • 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. • Your care team may prescribe medicine for these symptoms. Talk to your care team if you have: • Vomiting for more than 24 hours • Nonstop vomiting • Signs of dehydration (like feeling very thirsty, having a dry mouth, feeling dizzy, or having dark urine) • Blood or coffee-ground-like appearance in your vomit • Bad stomach pain that doesn't go away after vomiting
Constipation	Description: Constipation means having a hard time passing stools or not going to the bathroom often. Your stools might feel hard and dry, which can make you feel uncomfortable or cause pain. Recommendations: • Keep track of how many times you move your bowels every day. • Drink 8 to 10 glasses of water or other fluids each day, unless your care team tells you otherwise. • Exercise regularly. • Eat high-fiber foods like raw fruits and vegetables. • Your care team may recommend medicine (such as polyethylene glycol 3350 or senna) for constipation. Talk to your care team if you have: • Constipation that lasts 3 or more days • Constipation after 48 hours, even after using a laxative

Diarrhea	Description: Diarrhea is when you have loose, watery bowel movements more often than usual. The need to use the bathroom may occur urgently. Recommendations: • Keep track of how many times you go to the bathroom each day. • Drink 8 to 10 glasses of water or other fluids every day, unless your care team tells you otherwise. • Eat small meals of mild, low-fiber foods like bananas, applesauce, potatoes, chicken, rice, and toast. • 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. • Your care team may recommend medicine (such as loperamide) for diarrhea. Talk to your care team if you have: • 4 or more bowel movements than normal in 24 hours • Dizziness or lightheadedness while having diarrhea • Bloody diarrhea
Liver Problems	Description: Treatment can harm your liver. This may cause nausea, stomach pain, and bleeding or bruising. It can also turn your skin and eyes yellow and make your urine dark. Lab tests may be performed to monitor liver function. Talk to your care team if you have: • Yellowing of your skin or the whites of your eyes • Severe nausea or vomiting • Pain on the right side of your stomach area (abdomen) • Dark urine (tea colored) • Bleeding or bruising more easily than normal

Acne-Like Rash	Description: An acne-like rash is a skin condition. It usually appears on the face, neck, and back, causing red, inflamed bumps that may itch or feel dry. Recommendations: • If you get a rash, keep the area clean and dry. • Check with your care team before using any treatments. • Do not use over-the-counter acne treatments like benzoyl peroxide or salicylic acid, or soaps with alcohol. • Wash with a mild, moisturizing soap, and avoid long, hot baths or showers. • After washing, pat your skin dry instead of rubbing. • Oatmeal baths and unscented moisturizers may relieve itching. • Sunlight can worsen symptoms, so avoid sun exposure whenever possible. • Wear long-sleeved clothing with UV protection if possible. • Use broad-brimmed hats for added protection. • Apply broad-spectrum sunscreen (UVA/UVB, SPF 30 or higher) as directed. • Use lip balm with SPF 30 or higher. • Avoid tanning beds. • Your care team may recommend or prescribe medicine for rash. Talk to your care team if you have: • Painful or worsening rash • Rash that does not improve with treatment
Nail Problems	Description: Nails may become more brittle, thinner, and could change color during treatment. Recommendations: • Keep your fingernails and toenails trimmed short. • Wear cotton gloves when working. When cleaning or washing dishes, use cotton-lined rubber gloves to keep your hands from drying out and becoming irritated. Do not use unlined rubber gloves because they trap sweat and irritate the skin. • Avoid manicures, pedicures, and artificial nails, which may increase the risk of infection. • Do not bite your nails or pick at your cuticles. • Nail polish can help strengthen and may protect nails. To remove polish, use "oily" remover to prevent drying. • Soak your hands in natural oils (such as olive oil) to relieve dryness. • Wear loose-fitting shoes with cushioned cotton socks. Talk to your care team if you have: • Pain related to nail changes • Fingernails or toenails that separate from the nail bed

Low Magnesium Levels in Your Blood (Hypomagnesemia)	Description: Treatment may cause decreased levels of magnesium in your blood. Your care team will do blood tests to check you for these changes and will treat you if needed. Talk to your care team if you have: • Extreme fatigue • Irregular heartbeat or chest pain • Muscle spasm, twitches, tremors, or cramps • Numbness or tingling in your fingers or toes • Nausea, vomiting, or loss of appetite • Seizures
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Select Rare Side Effects

Side Effect	Talk to Your Care Team if You Have Any of These Signs or Symptoms
Infusion-Related Reactions (Boxed Warning)	You may have a higher risk of a serious infusion reaction if you have had a tick bite or a red meat allergy. • Chills or shaking • Itching, rash, or flushing • Trouble breathing or wheezing • Tongue swelling • Dizziness or feeling faint • Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher • Pain in your back or neck
Heart and Lung Problems (Boxed Warning)	There is a risk of heart and lung problems, including cardiopulmonary arrest or sudden death. Tell your care team if you have a history of coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure, or irregular heartbeats (arrhythmias).

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

- Talk with your care team about specific safety precautions you should take while receiving radiation therapy.
- 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.
- **Do NOT breastfeed** during treatment and for 2 months after your last dose.

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: March 9, 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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PES-592