

Patient Addressograph or details: Patient Name: Address: DOB: Hospital Number:
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Date:

Dear GP,

Your patient is planned to start cytotoxic chemotherapy. As you may be aware, the Department of Health recommends that all patients with cancer and who are to receive immunosuppressive chemotherapy should receive additional vaccinations. We would be grateful if you can arrange the following vaccinations:

(**oncologist / haematologist / nurse specialist** to only tick those which you wish the GP to administer)

- Influenza vaccine
- Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (Pneumovax®) PPV23
- A single dose of PCV13 (Prevenar13®) followed by PPV23 (Pneumovax®) at least two months later (*for patients with acute or chronic leukaemia, multiple myeloma, or bone marrow transplant patients*)
- Shingles vaccine
- Vaccination of close household contact(s) with influenza vaccine
- Varicella zoster (chickenpox) vaccination of unavoidable close contact / child of the patient

See below for details for timing of vaccinations:

Influenza vaccination

- Influenza vaccination should ideally be given at least two weeks prior to chemotherapy starts, but if this is not feasible, you may vaccinate either < 2 weeks before chemotherapy, or during chemotherapy.
- If vaccinating during intermittent IV chemotherapy, the optimal timing of the vaccine in relation to chemotherapy in order to achieve the best possible immune response to the vaccine is not known. Sensible advice is for the vaccine to be administered when the patients are not neutropenic:
 - vaccinate 2 – 4 days before the next chemotherapy cycle is due (or, if that is not possible, within 72 hours following chemotherapy)
- Patients on continuous oral anti-cancer therapy can continue therapy, without interruption.
- Note that the live influenza vaccine (Fluenz Tetra®) should not be used in this patient group.

Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (Pneumovax®)

Pneumococcal vaccination with a single dose of Pneumovax® (PPV23) should be given to patients treated with chemotherapy who have not previously been vaccinated against pneumococcus.

- Ideally vaccinate 4 - 6 weeks before the first cycle of chemotherapy
- If this is not possible, vaccinate > 2 weeks before the first cycle of chemotherapy
- If > 2 weeks pre-chemotherapy start is not feasible, delay vaccination to at least three months after completion of chemotherapy, in order to maximise the response to the vaccine. Immunisation of these patients should not be delayed if this is likely to result in a failure to vaccinate.

Pneumococcal vaccination of patients with acute or chronic leukaemia, or multiple myeloma, or bone marrow transplant patients

These patients require a single dose of PCV13 (Prevenar13®) followed by PPV23 (Pneumovax®) at least two months later.

- N.B. For leukaemia patients, PCV13 (Prevenar13®) should be given from six months after completion of chemotherapy, and for bone marrow transplant patients, PCV13 should be offered 9-12 months following transplantation.
- N.B. Patients in this group who have already received Pneumovax® (PPV23) should be offered PCV13 with an interval of at least six months following the dose of PPV23 to reduce the risk of pneumococcal serotype-specific hypo-responsiveness.

Shingles vaccination

If your patient is eligible for the shingles vaccine under the national programme, they may, *if they have no contra-indications*, receive a single dose of the vaccine at the earliest opportunity **only if** there are at least 14 days before starting immunosuppressive chemotherapy (although leaving one month before starting chemotherapy would be preferable).

Vaccination of close household contacts

- Influenza vaccination is recommended for close family contacts aged over 6 months.
- If the patient has no history of chickenpox **and** negative VSV serology, varicella zoster (chickenpox) vaccine is recommended for:
 - unavoidable close contacts / children aged < 16 with no definite history of chickenpox
 - unavoidable close contacts aged ≥ 16 with no definite history of chickenpox and negative VZV serology

Kind regards,

Oncologist / Haematologist / Nurse Specialist

For further information, the Department of Health "The Green Book" may be accessed on-line via <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immunisation-against-infectious-disease-the-green-book#the-green-book>

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