

Topotecan: information for families

This information sheet explains what topotecan is, how it is given and some of the possible side effects. Each person reacts differently to medicines, so your child will not necessarily suffer from every side effect mentioned. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

Please read this in conjunction with any patient information leaflet provided by the manufacturer. However, please note that this information sheet explains about the use of topotecan in children and young people so may differ from the manufacturer's information.

What is topotecan?

Topotecan is a chemotherapy medicine used in combination with other drugs for the treatment of certain types of cancer.

How is it given?

It is usually given as an infusion into a vein (intravenously or IV) through a cannula, central venous catheter or implantable port in hospital.

What are the side effects?

Bone marrow suppression

There will be a temporary reduction in how well your child's bone marrow works. This means that they may become anaemic, bruise or bleed more easily than usual and have a higher risk of infection. Your child's blood count will be examined regularly to check how well the bone marrow is working. Please tell your doctor if your child seems to be unusually tired, has bruising or bleeding or any signs of infection, especially a high temperature.

Nausea and vomiting

Anti-sickness drugs can be given to reduce or prevent these symptoms. Please tell your doctor or nurse if your child's sickness is not controlled or persists.

Diarrhoea

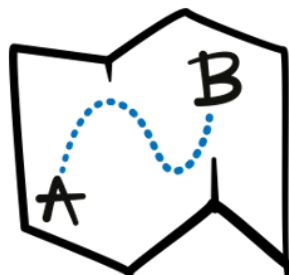
Please tell the doctor or nurse if your child has diarrhoea that is not controlled or persists. Some people may need to go to hospital to have fluids through a drip (IV infusion).

Constipation

Your child may become constipated and have tummy pain. This can generally be helped by drinking lots of fluids and eating a high-fibre diet. Sometimes the doctor may prescribe laxative medicines to stimulate your child's bowel function.

Mouth sores and ulcers

Your child's mouth may become sore or get painful ulcers. You will be given advice about appropriate mouth care including a copy of the mouth care leaflet. If your child complains about



having a sore mouth, please tell your doctor or nurse.

Loss of appetite

Your child may 'go off' food and their appetite may be reduced during treatment. The dietitian at the hospital will be able to suggest ways of making food more attractive to your child.

Tiredness

Your child may feel a bit more tired than usual. If you are concerned, please tell your doctor.

Hair loss

Your child may lose all their hair, including eyebrows and eyelashes, or it may become thinner. This is temporary and the hair will grow back once the treatment has finished.

Changes in liver function

Topotecan can cause some mild changes to your child's liver function. This should return to normal when the treatment is finished. Blood tests may be taken to monitor your child's liver function (LFTs).

Useful numbers

- GOSH switchboard 020 7405 9200
- Pharmacy medicines information 020 7829 8608 (Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm)

Disclaimer

Please read this information sheet from GOSH alongside the patient information leaflet (PIL) provided by the manufacturer. If you do not have a copy of the manufacturer's patient information leaflet please talk to your pharmacist. A few products do not have a marketing authorisation (licence) as a medicine and therefore there is no PIL.

For children in particular, there may be conflicts of information between the manufacturer's patient information leaflet (PIL) and guidance provided by GOSH and other healthcare providers. For example, some manufacturers may recommend, in the patient information leaflet, that a medicine is not given to children aged under 12 years. In most cases, this is because the manufacturer will recruit adults to clinical trials in the first instance and therefore the initial marketing authorisation (licence) only covers adults and older children.

For new medicines, the manufacturer then has to recruit children and newborns into trials (unless the medicine is not going to be used in children and newborns) and subsequently amend the PIL with the approved information. Older medicines may have been used effectively for many years in children without

Please discuss this with your doctor if you have further questions.

Flu-like symptoms

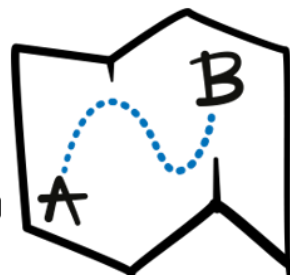
Your child may have headache, tiredness, aching joints and muscles, a high temperature and chills. This effect is temporary and paracetamol may be given to relieve these symptoms.

Less common side effects

Children may also develop other side effects although these are less common. Possible side effects include rashes or sore skin, reduced blood pressure, shortness of breath, changes in kidney function and allergic reactions to the medicine.

Interactions with other medicines

Some medicines can react with topotecan altering how well it works. Always check with your doctor or pharmacist before giving your child any other medicine, including medicines on prescription from your family doctor (GP), medicines bought from a pharmacy (chemist) or any herbal or complementary medicines.



problems but the manufacturer has not been required to collect data and amend the licence. This does not mean that it is unsafe for children and young people to be prescribed such a medicine 'off-licence/off-label'. However, if you are concerned about any conflicts of information, please discuss with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

