Pegylated Interferon treatment for Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B
Hepatitis B is an infection that causes inflammation and potential scarring to the liver.

Your treatment
You have started a 48 week course of Pegylated Interferon for treatment of your Hepatitis B infection.

Pegylated Interferon is an injection that is given on the same day each week. You must inject yourself in either the abdomen, approximately one inch away from your navel, or in the outside of your thigh. Please change the site of your injection each week. You must keep these injections in the fridge and remove them one hour before injecting.

Side effects
Pegylated Interferon commonly causes flu like symptoms six hours after injection, lasting for approximately 24 hours. Taking two paracetamol tablets an hour before your injection and then every four hours can help with these symptoms.

Please tell your nurse if you experience any of the following: irritability or low mood, rash, loss of appetite, dizziness, bleeding or unusual bruising, fatigue, headaches, insomnia, visual disturbances or reddening or bruising at the injection site.

Whilst these are common symptoms we would like to be able to help alleviate your anxiety and discomfort.

To lessen the side effects you can:
• Take your injection in the evening at around 6pm to minimise the experience of the flu like symptoms
• Aim to drink two litres of water a day
• Keep alcohol to a minimum
• Eat little and often, there are no dietary restrictions

Monitoring your progress
A nurse will see you every week for the first two weeks, then every two weeks for the next six weeks. After that the nurse will see you once a month.

At these visits you will have a blood test and your blood pressure and weight will be checked. There will be an opportunity to discuss any concerns you have, but please feel free to use the telephone number provided to contact us between visits should you wish to.

Your nurse will contact you by 6pm if a dose adjustment is needed.

It is common for the hepatitis B virus to remain detectable whilst on treatment and become undetectable during the six months post treatment.
You will be monitored on a regular basis to assess your liver function and Hepatitis B virus during and after your treatment.

If your virus fails to respond to Pegylated Interferon an alternative treatment may be offered to suppress the virus.

**Contraception**
We advise that you use two methods of contraception for the duration of treatment and for a further six months after treatment.

This is because there is a potential risk of miscarrying or carrying a child with birth defects if you or your partner becomes pregnant during this time. Please inform your nurse if you think that either you or your partner is pregnant.

**Contact details**
Please do not hesitate to contact the hepatology nurses if you would like further information.

Telephone: 023 8079 4617

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If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audio tape, please telephone 023 8079 4688 for help.