Azacitidine (Vidaza®)
("ay za SYE ti deen")

How drug is given: Injection into the vein (IV) or into the skin (SC)

Purpose: To kill cancer cells in myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS) and other types of leukemias and bone marrow disorders

Things that may occur during or within hours after each treatment

1. Mild to moderate nausea, vomiting, and loss of appetite may occur. You may be given medicine to help with this.

2. You may get a headache. Please talk to your doctor or nurse about what you can take for this.

Things that may occur a few days to weeks later

1. Your blood cell counts may drop. This is known as bone marrow suppression. This includes a decrease in your:
   - Red blood cells, which carry oxygen in your body to help give you energy
   - White blood cells, which fight infection in your body
   - Platelets, which help clot the blood to stop bleeding

   This may happen 7 to 14 days after the drug is given and then blood counts should return to normal. If you have a fever of 100.5°F (38°C) or higher, chills, a cough, or any bleeding problems, tell your doctor or nurse right away.

2. You may get mouth sores 7 to 10 days after this drug is given. It is important to keep your mouth clean. A soft-bristle toothbrush should be used for brushing your teeth. You may have a burning feeling and redness inside the mouth or on the lips. Use a baking soda mouth rinse 4 or 5 times a day.

   **Mouth Rinse Recipe:**
   Mix: 1 tsp salt or baking soda with 8 oz. glass of water

   Other mouth rinses may be ordered by your doctor. Do not use mouth washes that have alcohol in them because they will dry out the mouth. If you cannot eat or swallow because of this, let your doctor or nurse know. Check with your doctor before having any dental work done.
3. Mild constipation may occur after treatment begins. Please increase your fluid intake and increase fiber in your diet by eating fresh fruits and vegetables. A daily stool softener, such as docusate (Colace®) and/or laxatives such as senna (Senakot®) may be helpful. If these do not help within 48 hours, tell your doctor or nurse. Do not use bulk forming laxatives such as Metamucil® without talking with your doctor or nurse.

4. Loose stools or diarrhea may occur within 3 days after the drug is given. You may take loperamide (Imodium A-D®) to help control diarrhea. You may buy this at most drug stores. It is also important to drink more fluids (water, juice, sports drinks). If these do not help, tell your doctor or nurse.

5. Skin changes such as dryness or a rash on your body may occur. Ask your doctor or nurse about what lotions or creams you may use.

6. If the drug is being injected into the skin, you may develop bruising at the site.

7. If you develop a new or worsening cough or shortness of breath, report this to your doctor or nurse.

8. Your body may not be able to get rid of extra fluid. This is called edema. You may notice some swelling in your arms or legs.

9. You may feel pain or weakness in your joints or muscles. If these bother you, ask your doctor or nurse what kind of drugs you may use to help with this pain.

10. Some patients may feel very tired, also known as fatigue. You may need to rest or take naps more often. Mild to moderate exercise can also be helpful in maintaining your energy.

**Things that may occur after your treatment ends (even months to years later)**

**Fertility and Related Precautions:**
- It is very important to use birth control if you are having sex, because this drug could be harmful to an unborn baby.
- Women should not breast-feed while receiving this drug.
- If you are concerned about any of this, please talk with your doctor or nurse.

The above information includes some, but not necessarily all, of the possible side effects of this medication. The side effects in this teaching sheet may not be the same ones you experience. Your side effects may be different, depending on how often you receive treatment (your schedule) and how much you receive each time (your dosage). Side effects may also vary if you take other medications. Please talk with your doctor or nurse if you have questions about possible side effects you may experience. This document should not take the place of conversations with members of your health care team.
If you experience any significant change in your health during or after treatment, contact a member of your health care team right away.