Irinotecan (Camptosar®)
(“eye rye no TEE kan”)

How drug is given: by vein (IV)

Purpose: to kill cancer cells in colon cancer, rectal cancer, and other cancers

Things that may occur during or within hours of treatment

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

2. Stomach cramping, diarrhea, runny nose, watery eyes and sweating may occur during or shortly after the infusion. Drugs to prevent or treat this can be given.

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. Your liver may be affected by this drug. In such cases, your skin might turn yellow and a yellow coloring may be seen in the whites of your eyes. You may have pain in your right side. You may feel more tired. If you have any of these symptoms, please let your doctor or nurse know right away.

3. Loose stools or diarrhea may occur during or within a few days after the drug is given. You can take loperamide (Imodium A-D®) to help control diarrhea. You can 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.
4. Some or all of your hair may fall out around 3 to 4 weeks after treatment starts. You may lose hair on your head, as well as facial and body hair. You may want to buy a wig before hair loss begins. Hair may grow back during treatment.

5. Some patients may feel very tired, also known as fatigue. You may need to rest or take naps more often. Mild to moderate exercise may also help you maintain your energy.

6. If you develop a new or worsening cough or shortness of breath, tell your doctor or nurse.

**Things that may occur after 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.
  - Men may become sterile and may want to think about sperm banking prior to chemotherapy
  - For women, your period (menstrual cycle) may not be regular for a while or may stop completely and you may not be able to get pregnant.
  - 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.

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**THIS SPACE RESERVED FOR WRITTEN COMMENTS OR NOTES FOR THE PATIENT AND FAMILY:**

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