**Pemetrexed (Alimta®)**
(“pem e TREXS ed”)

**How drug is given:** by vein (IV)

**Purpose:** to kill cancer cells in mesothelioma, lung cancer, and other cancers

**Things that may occur early in treatment**

1. Pemetrexed, as with many drugs, may cause an allergic reaction. If you have a rash, facial flushing (warmth or redness of the face), or itching during or after you get this drug, please tell your doctor or nurse right away.

2. You may have nausea, vomiting, and/or loss of appetite. You may be given medicine to help with this.

3. Loose stools or diarrhea may occur. 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).

**Things that may occur later in treatment**

1. You may get mouth sores and/or a sore throat 7 to 10 days after this drug is given. 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. It is important to keep your mouth clean. 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 such as those containing peroxide or mouthwashes that have alcohol in them may irritate your mouth because of this, let your doctor know before having any dental work done.

2. Skin changes such as dryness or a rash on your body may occur.
3. 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 (39°C) or higher, chills, a cough, or any bleeding problems, tell your doctor or nurse right away.

4. Mild constipation may occur within 1 to 2 weeks 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®) or Miralax®, may be helpful. If these do not help within 48 hours, tell your doctor or nurse. Avoid bulk forming laxatives such as Metamucil®.

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 can also be helpful in maintaining your energy. (You may also be less interested in doing your usual activities.) Talk with your doctor or nurse.

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

- Fertility:
  - It is still very important to use birth control if you are having sex, because this drug could harm 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. If you are concerned about any of this, please talk with your doctor or nurse.

These are some of the possible side effects of pemetrexed. The side effects listed 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 are taking other medications. Please speak with your doctor or nurse if you have any questions.

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

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