



# NEBRASKA CANCER SPECIALISTS

*the Physicians of Oncology Hematology West*

## **DepoCyt<sup>®</sup>**

**Generic name:** Cytarabine Liposomal

**Trade name:** DepoCyt<sup>®</sup>

**Drug type:** DepoCyt is a sustained-release form of cytarabine liposomal. It is an anti-cancer/antineoplastic chemotherapy drug.

### **How this drug is given:**

- Liposomal cytarabine is given is by intraventricular or intrathecal infusion. This method is used when drugs need to reach the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) the fluid that is surrounding the brain and spinal cord, the drug is infused directly into the spinal fluid.

There are two ways chemotherapy can be given to the CSF:

- Lumbar puncture (Intrathecal). Chemotherapy can be given through a lumbar puncture (spinal tap). In this case a small amount of chemotherapy is injected during the lumbar puncture, directly into the CSF. Once the drug is administered the catheter is removed.
- Ommaya reservoir (Intraventricular). The ommaya reservoir is a small dome-shaped device with an attached catheter. It is placed into the subcutaneous tissue (the layer of tissue between the skin and the muscle) on the scalp. The catheter is threaded into an outer area of the brain. The nurse or doctor, who is specially trained on this method of giving chemotherapy, will insert a small needle through the skin on the scalp into the ommaya reservoir to inject the chemotherapy.

### **Side effects:**

Important things to remember about the side effects of cytarabine:

- Most people do not experience all of the side effects listed.
- Side effects are almost always reversible and will usually go away after treatment is complete.
- There are many options to help minimize or prevent side effects.

### **The following side effects are common for patients receiving liposomal cytarabine:**

- Inflammation of the sac surrounding the brain and spinal cord. This can cause neck pain, neck rigidity, headache, fever, nausea, vomiting, and back pain. Steroids are given before and for 5 days after the injection to prevent or lessen this reaction.

**These are less common side effects for patients receiving liposomal cytarabine:**

- Headache
- Confusion
- Weakness
- Excessive sleepiness
- Nausea and vomiting
- Fever

**When to contact your doctor or health care provider:**

Contact your health care provider ***immediately***, day or night, if you should experience any of the following symptoms:

- Neck pain or rigidity
- Headache
- Fever of 101°F or higher, chills (possible signs of infection)
- Nausea and/or vomiting

The following symptoms require medical attention, but are not an emergency. Contact your health care provider ***within 24 hours*** of noticing any of the following:

- Swelling of the feet or ankles
- Sudden weakness
- Changes in balance and coordination

**Always inform your health care provider if you experience any unusual symptoms.**