

Thiotepa (Thioplex®)

What is Thiotepa?

Thiotepa is an intravenous chemotherapy drug used to treat a variety of cancers. It can be given alone or in combination with other chemotherapy agents.

How will I receive Thiotepa?

Thiotepa can be given as an infusion into your vein. Your treatment schedule will depend on your condition and the way the drug was given.

What are the common side effects?

Please see “Managing Symptoms at Home” in your Patient Care Manual and refer to the Symptom Management section.

What You May Expect	What You Should Do
Bone marrow suppression (lowered white and red blood cell count, lowered platelet count) will occur following Thiotepa therapy. You may develop fevers or infections, become extremely tired/weak, and may bruise/bleed more easily. Your doctor will test your blood frequently to monitor your blood counts. If your white blood cell or platelet count declines too fast, the dose may be reduced or the drug may be stopped.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may receive red blood cell, platelet transfusions, or require other medications that can increase your blood counts. Report any signs or symptoms of infection, fever, excessive bleeding, or bruising to your doctor or nurse.
Fevers and infection may occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay away from crowds places and people with colds, flu, or other infections Keep your mouth clean to prevent infections. You may brush your teeth with a soft toothbrush. Notify your physician or nurse if you have a fever, chills, or sweating.
Mucositis (development of mouth sores) can occur during therapy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please see the “Mouth Pain/Mucositis” section of the resource manual. Notify your doctor or nurse if you cannot eat or drink fluids.
Nausea/vomiting (especially with high doses) can occur during therapy. Loss of appetite (anorexia), and abdominal pains can also occur.	<p>Medications to prevent nausea will be prescribed to you. Take them as directed by your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse. It is easier to prevent nausea than treat it once it has occurred.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drink plenty of liquids. Eat and drink often in small amounts. For breakthrough nausea/vomiting you may take medication as prescribed to you by your physician. Notify your medical team if you are

	experiencing uncontrolled nausea/vomiting despite therapy.
Low blood sodium levels can occur with high dose Thiotepa (usually doses used for bone marrow/stem cell transplants). You may be confused, nauseous, develop severe headaches, or vomiting if this occurs. Occasionally this can result in seizures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink sodium containing fluids (Gatorade®, V8® tomato juice, etc). • Limit excessive drinking of water. • You may require medications that will remove excess fluid from your body. • You may require additional intravenous infusions of sodium if your blood sodium level is moderately to severely low.
Thiotepa can damage sperm or cause sterility in men. It can temporarily or permanently stop the menstrual cycle in women.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are pregnant OR plan to have children in the future, discuss this with your physician before receiving treatment. • Use an effective form of birth control while you or your partner is being treated with Thiotepa. • Notify your doctor immediately if you or your partner becomes pregnant. • Contact your doctor if you or your partner has missed any menstrual cycles while receiving therapy.
Secondary cancers such as leukemia and other blood cancers can develop following Thiotepa treatment.	Discuss with your doctor about the potential risk of developing a new cancer.

These are the most common side effects. Others may occur. Please report any problems to your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse.

Call and Seek Help Immediately If You Have:

- Signs of an infection such as fever, chills, cough, pain or burning when you urinate.
- Signs of uncontrolled bleeding such as nosebleeds, black tarry stools, blood in the urine or severe bruising.
- Signs of heart problems such as shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, swelling of the feet or lower legs.
- Allergic reaction including itching or hives, swelling in the face or hands, swelling or tingling in the mouth or throat, tightness in the chest, or difficulty breathing.

Contact Your Nurse or Doctor If You Have:

- Uncontrolled nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Redness, swelling or pain at your catheter site.
- Painful mouth sores that prevent you from eating and/or drinking fluids.
- Missed any menstrual cycle.
- Skin rash and hives.

Special Instructions

Do not take Thiotepa if you have had an allergic reaction to it in the past. Inform your physician if you have liver, kidney, or bone marrow damage before receiving therapy with this drug. Use birth control when receiving chemotherapy. Talk to your doctor or nurse about any additional questions.

If you are receiving “High Dose” Thiotepa (>500mg/m²) you are at risk of skin problems. Please see the section under “Thiotepa and Your Skin” on this handout.

Inform your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Drug-Drug Interactions

Drug interactions have occurred between Thiotepa and aspirin, aspirin-containing products (including Alka-Seltzer® and various combination cold remedies), NSAIDs (including ibuprofen (Advil®), Ketoprofen, Naproxen, etc), Succinylcholine and other muscle relaxants, and vaccines (including flu vaccines). Notify your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse if you are currently taking or planning to take these medications. Do not take any of these medications while you are receiving Thiotepa unless your doctor has given such approval.

DO NOT take any other medications including over-the-counter products, vitamins, nutritional supplements, and/or other herbal products before speaking to your doctor or pharmacist.

Drug-Food Interactions

None have been reported at this time.

Thiotepa and Your Skin

If you are receiving “High Dose” Thiotepa (>500mg/m²), you are at risk for skin problems because the excreted drug can come through the skin in sweat. Skin problems can occur anywhere. They may be worst in the groin, armpits, creases, neck area and under dressings. These skin problems can include: skin discoloration, itching, blistering, skin breakdown and peeling. There are suggestions listed below to decrease skin damage.

Your Bathing Plan:

- Take a shower, bath or sponge bath 4 times a day while receiving Thiotepa.
- Use just water or a gentle non-soap cleanser to wash the skin.
- Take your first shower, bath or sponge bath 3-4 hours after receiving the first dose.
- Continue this bathing plan for 36 hours after the last dose of Thiotepa.
- After bathing, put on clean undergarments and loose-fitting clothes.
- Do not apply lotions or creams on the days you receive Thiotepa or for 36 hours after as these can “trap” sweat close to the skin and increase exposure to the excreted drug.

Central Line Dressing Changes

- Use a gauze type dressing with minimal tape and change it daily on the days you receive Thiotepa and for 36 hours after your last dose of Thiotepa. **Do not wear an occlusive dressing (such as Tegaderm or Tegaderm CHG) over your Central Venous Access Device on the days you receive Thiotepa as these can “trap” sweat close to the skin and increase exposure to the excreted drug.**

For more complete information please request an additional teaching sheet from the National Library of Medicine at www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginformation.html, or your nurse, pharmacist, or Resource Center.