MEDICINE INFORMATION

Mitomycin for heated intraperitoneal chemotherapy (HIPEC)

What to expect when mitomycin is used inside the abdomen during surgery, including bowel recovery and blood tests.

At a glance

Treatment	Mitomycin
When it may be used	Mitomycin HIPEC has been studied in selected cancers that involve the lining of the abdomen, including tumours that start in the appendix.
How it is given	The surgical team circulates warmed mitomycin inside the abdomen while you are under anaesthesia.
Before you start	Ask what surgery is planned, whether the bowel may be involved, and who will support you after discharge.

What this treatment is and how it works

HIPEC circulates warmed chemotherapy inside the abdomen during surgery. This sheet describes the use of mitomycin, also called mitomycin C.

When it may be used

Mitomycin HIPEC has been studied in selected tumours that start in the appendix and spread to the lining of the abdomen. A specialist team considers the exact tumour type, where it has spread and whether it can be removed safely. The evidence varies by cancer type. The surgeon can explain what applies to your diagnosis and which parts of the plan may change during surgery.

Before treatment

Tell the team about infections, kidney problems, previous chemotherapy and medicines.

How treatment is given

Under anaesthesia the surgical team removes tumour as planned and uses warmed chemotherapy inside the abdomen. You may need close monitoring in a high-dependency or intensive care unit after surgery.

Tests and monitoring during treatment

The team follows blood counts, kidney function, wound healing, bowel activity and fluid balance. Some effects on blood counts can occur after discharge, so keep scheduled blood tests.

Side effects

Common or more frequent side effects

- **Pain, tiredness and changes in appetite.** Recovery depends on the organs involved in the operation. Ask what to expect for your wound and pain medicines, and when to build up walking and daily activities. Let the team know if pain is increasing rather than improving, or if food and drink are hard to manage.
- **Changes in bowel function.** The bowel can take time to start working again after abdominal surgery. Your team will explain when to drink and eat, and will check bowel movements or stoma output if relevant. Call if vomiting recurs, your abdomen becomes increasingly swollen or you stop passing stools or wind and feel unwell.

Other reported side effects

Tell the team about a change in wound drainage, new swelling, or difficulty eating or drinking. Ask which bowel symptoms are expected for your operation.

Serious effects to recognise

- **Complications after abdominal surgery.** Fever, worsening belly pain or swelling, repeated vomiting, wound discharge, or a marked change in stoma output should be reported urgently. Ask at discharge which team to call even if you are recovering far from the hospital.

Mitomycin can also lower blood counts. Ask when your team will check them after surgery.

When to seek urgent help

Tell ward staff or call the surgical team urgently for fever, shaking chills, worsening abdominal pain, ongoing vomiting, wound redness or discharge, unusual bleeding or much less urine.

Seek emergency care for severe breathing difficulty, swelling of the face or throat, chest pain, collapse or bleeding that will not stop.

Practical advice for this treatment

Ask how HIPEC fits into the operation

HIPEC is heated chemotherapy circulated inside the abdomen after selected surgery to remove visible tumour. Mitomycin is one medicine that may be used. Ask what the team hopes to achieve, whether the final decision depends on findings during surgery and how it plans to manage bowel function after the operation.

Make a plan for after discharge

Your team may check blood counts and kidney function after surgery. Ask when the blood tests are due, which contact number to use for fever, and who will see you for wound or stoma checks. Bring a summary of the operation and the name mitomycin if you attend another hospital.

Take new symptoms seriously during recovery

Call your hospital's 24-hour cancer care number straight away for fever, worsening belly pain, swelling, repeated vomiting, wound discharge or reduced urine. Unusual bruising or bleeding can signal low blood counts. Ask which foods and activities your team recommends while you recover.

Medicines, interactions and vaccinations

Check when to pause and restart blood thinners or other regular medicines around surgery. Use pain and bowel medicines according to your discharge plan.

Everyday life

Plan for help with meals, wound care and gentle walking. If you have a stoma, ask to meet a stoma nurse and get advice before leaving hospital.

Pregnancy, fertility and breastfeeding

Ask how surgery and chemotherapy could affect fertility and pregnancy plans. Discuss contraception and breastfeeding precautions with the team.

After treatment

Keep follow-up for the operation, blood counts and any further cancer care. Ask which signs mean you need an earlier visit.

Frequently asked questions

Is this the same as mitomycin in the bladder?

No. HIPEC uses warmed treatment inside the abdomen during surgery.

Is mitomycin the only drug used for HIPEC?

Other drugs may be used for different cancers or protocols. Ask why mitomycin was chosen.

What if my bowels are slow after surgery?

Ask your team what to expect and when to call. Worsening pain, swelling and repeated vomiting need urgent advice.

Why do I need blood tests after going home?

Your team may want to check for low blood counts while you recover from surgery and HIPEC. Keep the tests even if you feel well. Call the surgical team for fever, shaking chills or unusual bleeding between appointments.

Will I need a stoma?

It depends on your operation. Ask your surgeon and stoma nurse about the likelihood and what support is available.

Do I need additional treatment afterwards?

Ask when surgical results will be discussed and what they mean for your next treatment.

Does this use the same instructions as mitomycin through a vein?

The hospital uses separate procedures and precautions for treatment inside the abdomen during surgery. Ask your team which effects are most relevant to your recovery.

Individual medicine guides

- Mitomycin

Sources and further reading

Read this guide alongside your hospital's plan. Ask your pharmacist to confirm the exact product dispensed in India and follow the instructions for that product.

Summary of Product Characteristics (SmPC) and prescribing information

The SmPC covers the injectable medicine. The HIPEC references below cover its use as heated chemotherapy in the abdomen.

- Mitomycin (Mitocin) - UK SmPC for the injectable product, for medicine safety
- US prescribing information for systemic mitomycin, for medicine safety

Clinical protocols and other references

- Long-term randomised mitomycin HIPEC study in appendiceal tumours

Additional sources

- Randomised study of mitomycin HIPEC in appendiceal tumours
- UCLH patient information about HIPEC

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