Arroyo Grande Community Hospital
A Dignity Health Member

If you have any questions, **please consult your physician or call AGCH Coastal Cancer Care at 805.739.3780. For emergency, call 911.**

PATIENT EDUCATION

Interferon (Roferon-A or Intron)

SIDE EFFECTS

It is important for the patient to follow all prescription instructions carefully. You may experience some, all, or none of the following:

- **Flu-like Symptoms –** For the first 24 hours after receiving this drug you may feel you have the flu. You may have fever, chills, headache, and muscle aches. Take Tylenol every 4 hours for the first 24 hours after receiving this drug if so ordered by your doctor. These side effects will lessen after a few weeks.
- **Depression**
- **Fatigue –** This may increase as your treatment continues. Take rest periods/naps.
- **Nausea/Diarrhea –** May occur. Ask for medication if this is a problem
- **Loss of Appetite –** You may not feel like eating while taking this treatment. It is important to eat small, frequent meals if this occurs to avoid weight loss.
- **Lowered Blood Counts –** This is temporary and will cause you to be more susceptible to infections and bleeding. Lab tests may be done to monitor your blood counts.
- **Hair Loss –** May have mild hair thinning. Will grow back over time.
- **Dry, Itchy Skin –** May occur – change injection sites and avoid taking long hot baths which robs skin of moisture.

PATIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Notify your doctor or nurse immediately if you experience:

- Signs of Infection: Chills or fever above 100.5°F, new or significant cough or shortness of breath, pain or burning with urination, white patches in your mouth or tongue
- Signs of Bleeding: Nosebleed that will not stop with pressure, bleeding gums, blood in urine or stool, unusual bruising, red or purple spots on body
- Severe fatigue
- Weight loss of 5 pounds or more in 1 week
- Depression, severe mood changes, confusion

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

- **Birth Control Measures –** are necessary during and for 4 months after treatment due to potential harm to sperm/egg health.
- **Before any dental procedure, be sure to tell your dentist you are taking this medication.**
- Most of the side effects experienced with this drug become less severe and often disappear over time. Tylenol can be helpful in controlling many of the symptoms.