Arroyo Grande Community Hospital
A Dignity Health Member

If you have any questions, **please consult your physician or call AGCH Coastal Cancer Care at 805.481.7245. For emergency, call 911.**

PATIENT EDUCATION

L-Asparaginase (Elspar)

SIDE EFFECTS

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

- **Allergic Reactions –** May occur producing skin rash, fever, chills, or difficulty in breathing – TELL YOUR NURSE IF YOU HAVE ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS.
- **Nausea/Vomiting –** May occur within 4-6 hours after treatment. You will be given medication to try and prevent or control this.
- **Headache**
- **Fever –** (100-101F**)** Occurs in about half of the patients receiving this drug.
- **Loss of Appetite –** May occur
- **"Blahs" –** Occurs in most patients, and generally gets worse with each added dose.
- **Skin Rash –** May occur
- **Sore Arm Muscles –** May occur.
- **Liver Problems –** Blood counts of liver function will be monitored on a regular basis. May appear as a yellowing of eyes and skin.
- **High Blood Sugar**
- **Drowsiness**

PATIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Notify your doctor or oncology nurse immediately if you experience:

- Hives or arm soreness that lasts longer than one day
- Skin rash, shortness of breath, drowsiness, puffy face, or joint pain
- Persistent nausea or vomiting or can not take ear or drink for 24 hours
- Yellowing of skin or eyes

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.**
- You may be given a test dose before receiving this drug.
- Use caution when driving due to possible drowsiness
- Some patients have a severe drug reaction that consists of hives, chills, fever, facial redness, lowered blood pressure, and shortness of breath. This happens shortly after the drug is given. The doctor and nurse will be immediately available for 30 minutes after the drug is given to treat the problem if it does occur. If you experience such a reaction to this drug, **DO NOT TAKE THIS DRUG AGAIN.** An alternate drug called Erwinia Asparaginase is available for patients who experience an allergy to L-Asparaginase. Erwinia Asparaginase has the same properties as L-Asparaginase.
- NO IMMUNIZATIONS WITHOUT DOCTOR'S APPROVAL.