- **Hearing loss and tinnitus** – some patients can experience a change in their hearing or a buzzing. Please let us know if you experience any changes in your hearing and we can adjust the dose of chemotherapy.

- **Kidney damage** – Cisplatin can put a strain on your kidneys. We check your kidney function with a blood test every cycle and give lots of fluids to flush the drug through your system. This is the reason we ask you to drink plenty of fluids when you get home.

- **Effects on fertility** – all chemotherapy can affect fertility and all patients should use contraception during chemotherapy and for 1 year after. Please discuss this with your oncologist if this issue is important to you.

- **Constipation or Diarrhoea** – some patients have problems with diarrhoea or constipation. You should let your GP or hospital doctor know if this is a problem for you.

Cancer Treatment Helpline
0800 9177711

Reviewed: Aug 2013
Next review: Feb 2015

Understanding Cisplatin/Etoposide Chemotherapy
A Guide for Patients with Lung Cancer

Edinburgh Cancer Centre
Introduction

This leaflet is designed to help you and your family understand more about the chemotherapy you are about to receive to treat your cancer.

Your Chemotherapy

You will be receiving a combination of two different drugs:

- Cisplatin is a colourless drug given in a drip over 2 hours on the first day of treatment.
- Etoposide is also colourless and given in a drip on the first, second and third days.

Additional fluids will be given through the drip before and after the Cisplatin. These drugs are given every 3 weeks. This is called a cycle of chemotherapy. You will also receive anti-sickness medication before and after your treatment.

How do we know the treatment is working?

The number of chemotherapy treatments varies depending on each individual treatment plan but we generally give 4 cycles of chemotherapy and review the plan thereafter. Your doctor will monitor the effect of your chemotherapy each time you receive treatment. You will also have a Chest X-ray before each cycle of treatment. At the end of 2 cycles of chemotherapy you will have a CT scan. This gives you and us a better understanding of how you are responding your treatment.

Side effects of chemotherapy

- **Tiredness** – all cancer treatments can make you quite fatigued. We can give you advice on how best to deal with this.
- **Nausea and Vomiting** – this can be a problem with chemotherapy. However, you will be given strong anti-sickness tablets to take whilst receiving your chemotherapy and for a few days afterwards to combat this.
- **Effects on blood making cells** - all chemotherapy can damage the bone marrow. This can make you more prone to:
  - **Anaemia** and you may require blood transfusions
  - **Bleeding or bruising** – this is due to a reduction of platelets (clotting cells) in your blood. You may require a platelet transfusion.
  - **Infections** – this is due to a reduction of white blood cells (infection fighting cells). Infections can be potentially life-threatening, and if you develop a temperature you should seek medical advice immediately.
  - **Hair loss** – unfortunately you will lose your hair. This is a gradual process which starts about 2 weeks after starting your treatment. Your hair will start to re-grow once your treatment is completed. You will be given advice and support regarding the provision of a wig.
  - **Mouth ulcers** – some patients may develop mouth ulcers during chemotherapy. It is important to keep your mouth clean and you will be supplied with mouthwashes and given advice on how to deal with this problem if it occurs. Some patients also notice a metallic taste in their mouth and may go off their favourite foods.
  - **Numbness and tingling in hands and feet** – please let us know if you experience this and we can adjust the dose of chemotherapy.

If you become unwell or develop a temperature you should seek medical advice immediately, by phoning the Cancer Treatment Helpline on 0800 9177711