

Medication Information Sheet

venetoclax (veh-NEH-toh-klax)

This document provides general information about your medication. It does not replace the advice of your health care professional. Always discuss your therapy with your health care professional and refer to the package insert for more details.

Other Name: Venclexta™

Appearance: tablet in various strengths and colours

What is this medication for?

- For treating a type of blood cancer called chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL).

What should I do before I have this medication?

- Tell your health care team if you have or had significant medical condition(s), especially if you have or had:
 - kidney problems,
 - liver problems, or
 - an active infection.
- People with cancer have a higher risk of getting other cancers or developing blood clots. Some cancer medications may increase these risks, especially if used for a long period of time. Discuss any concerns about this medication with your health care team.

How will this medication affect sex, pregnancy and breastfeeding?

- The use of this medication in men or women may cause harm to the unborn baby if pregnancy occurs. Let your health care team know if you or your partner is pregnant, becomes pregnant during treatment, or if you are breastfeeding
- If there is **any chance** that you or your partner may become pregnant, you and your partner together must:
 - ► **Use 2 effective forms of birth control at the same time** while taking this drug. Keep using birth control for at least **30 days** after your last dose unless your health care team told you differently. Talk to your health care team to figure out the best method(s) for you and/or your partner.
- Do not breastfeed while using this drug.

- This medication may affect fertility (ability to get pregnant)

How is this medication given?

- This medication is usually taken once a day by mouth, at around the same time each day.
- Swallow whole with a glass of water, with food.
- If you miss a dose, take it if it is within 8 hours from the missed dose, otherwise skip and take your next dose as scheduled. Do not double the dose to make up for the forgotten dose.
- You will start taking venetoclax at a low dose. The dose will be increased each week for 5 weeks until you get to the full dose. Do not start the new dose until your doctor tells you it is safe to do so.
- You will need to drink plenty of water (at least 7 glasses) each day, starting 2 days before your first dose (unless you have been told otherwise). It is very important to remember to do this during the first 5 weeks, and each time your dose is increased.
- Ensure you identify the tablets correctly to make sure you get the right dose.
- If you vomit after taking a dose, do not repeat the dose. Take your next dose as scheduled.
- If you stop this medication 1 week or longer, speak to your doctor before re-starting. You may need to start at a lower dose.

What else do I need to know while on this medication?

- This medication often interacts with other medications and can result in the treatment not working as well or cause severe side effects.
- Make sure your health care team knows about all your medications (prescription, over-the-counter, herbals and supplements) especially if you are taking medicine to treat an infection, to prevent seizures or treat epilepsy, to treat heart conditions or high blood pressure, warfarin, or St. John's Wort. Check with your health care team before starting or stopping any of them.
- Do not eat or drink grapefruit, starfruit, Seville oranges or their juices (or products that contain these) while taking this drug. They may increase the amount of drug in your blood and increase side effects.
- For mild aches and pain:
 - You may take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) tablets. Ask your health care team about the right dose for you.
 - Ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®), naproxen (Aleve®) or aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid, ASA), including low dose aspirin for heart conditions, may increase your chance of bleeding.

*The most updated version and more symptom control information can be found on: <http://www.cancercare.on.ca/druginfo>

Prepared with input from the Cancer Care Ontario-Medication Information Sheets Working Group.

November 2016

- Talk to your health care team before you start or stop these medications.
 - If you feel unwell, take your temperature before taking any of these medications. They may hide a fever.
 - **Talk to your health care team or go to the closest emergency room right away if you have a fever.** See the [Fever](#) pamphlet for more information.
- Drinking alcohol and smoking during your treatment may increase some side effects and make your medication less effective. Speak to your health care team about smoking and drinking alcohol while on treatment.

How should I safely store this medication?

- Keep this medication in the original packaging at room temperature in a dry place, away from heat and light. Keep out of sight and reach of children and pets.
- Do not throw out any unused medications at home. Bring them to your pharmacy to be thrown away safely.

What are the side effects of this medication?

You may not have all of the side effects below. You may have side effects that are not listed.

Side effects and what to do	When to contact doctor?
Common Side Effects (25-49 out of 100 people)	
<p>Unusual bleeding or bruising</p> <p>You may have black stools, cough up blood, blood in your urine, purple or red dots on your skin or bleeding that will not stop.</p> <p>Fever, chills, infection</p> <p>You have a fever if your temperature taken in your mouth (oral temperature) is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 38.3°C (100.9°F) or higher at any time OR • 38.0°C (or 100.4°F) or higher for at least one hour. <p>While you are getting chemotherapy treatments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep a digital thermometer at home and take your temperature if you feel hot or unwell (for example, chills). • Avoid taking medications that treat a fever before you take your temperature (for example, Tylenol®, acetaminophen, Advil® or ibuprofen) as they may hide a fever. 	<p>Get emergency medical help right away</p>

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Side effects and what to do	When to contact doctor?
Common Side Effects (25-49 out of 100 people)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not eat or drink anything hot or cold right before taking your temperature. • Wash your hands often. • Check with your doctor before getting any vaccines, surgeries, medical procedures or visiting your dentist. <p>If you have a fever, talk to your health care team or go to the closest emergency room. See our Neutropenia (Low white blood cell count) pamphlet for more information.</p>	
<p>Diarrhea</p> <p>May happen days to weeks after you get your treatment.</p> <p>If you have diarrhea :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take anti-diarrhea medication if your health care team prescribed it. • Avoid foods or drinks with artificial sweetener (e.g. chewing gum, “diet” drinks), coffee and alcohol. • Eat many small meals and snacks instead of 2 or 3 large meals. • Drink at least 6 to 8 cups of liquids each day. Talk to your health care team if you can’t drink 6-8 cups of liquids each day when you have diarrhea. You may need special liquids with salt and sugar, called Oral Rehydration Therapy. <p>See the Diarrhea pamphlet for more information.</p>	Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe
<p>Nausea or vomiting (generally mild)</p> <p>May occur in hours to days after your treatment.</p> <p>If you have nausea or vomiting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take anti-nausea medication(s) as prescribed to you by your doctor. • Drink clear liquids and have small meals. Get fresh air and rest. • Do not eat spicy, fried foods or foods with a strong smell. • Limit caffeine (e.g. coffee, tea) and alcohol. • Contact your health care team if the prescribed anti-nausea medications are not helping to control your nausea and vomiting. <p>Also see Nausea & Vomiting pamphlet for more information.</p>	Contact your healthcare team if no improvement or severe

Side effects and what to do	When to contact doctor?
Less Common Side Effects (10-24 out of 100 people)	
<p>Fatigue (tiredness)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be active and aim to get 30 minutes of moderate exercise (you are able to talk comfortably while exercising) on most days. Check with your health care team before starting any new exercise. • Pace yourself, do not rush. Put off less important activities. Rest when you need to. • Eat well and stay hydrated by drinking at least 6 to 8 glasses of water or other liquids every day (unless your doctor told you to drink more or less). • Avoid driving or using machinery if you are feeling tired <p>See our Fatigue pamphlet for more information.</p>	<p>Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe</p>
<p>Salt imbalances</p> <p>It may cause muscle twitching, severe weakness or cramping, confusion and irregular heartbeat.</p>	<p>Get emergency medical help right away</p>
<p>Headache; mild joint, muscle pain or cramps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take your pain medication as prescribed by your doctor. • You can take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) tablets as needed for mild aches and pains. Ask your doctor or pharmacist about the right dose for you. • Talk to your doctor or pharmacist first before taking ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®), naproxen (Aleve®) or aspirin. These medication may increase bleeding risk. • Rest often and try light exercise as it may help. 	<p>Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe</p>
<p>Constipation</p> <p>To help prevent constipation :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink more liquids and eat well. Drink at least 6 to 8 cups of liquids each day unless you have been told otherwise. • Be Active. Exercise can help to keep you regular. • Try to eat more fiber (e.g. fruits with skin, leafy greens and whole grains). If you take opioid pain medication, ask your health care team if eating more fibre is right for you. <p>To help treat constipation :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have not had a bowel movement in 2 to 3 days you may need to take a laxative. Ask your health care team what to do. <p>See the Constipation Pamphlet for more information.</p>	<p>Contact your health care team if no improvement or if severe</p>

Other rare, but serious side effects are possible.

If you experience ANY of the following, speak to your cancer health care provider or get emergency medical help right away:

- Confusion
- Dark urine (pee); less urine than normal
- Fever and chills
- Irregular heartbeat
- Shortness of breath
- Yellowing of your skin or whites of your eyes
- Pain in the top part of your stomach
- Skin changes (such as new spots or growths on your skin)

For more links on how to manage your symptoms go to www.cancercare.on.ca/symptoms.

The information set out in the medication information sheets, regimen information sheets, and symptom management information (for patients) contained in the Drug Formulary (the "Formulary") is intended to be used by health professionals and patients for informational purposes only. The information is not intended to cover all possible uses, directions, precautions, drug interactions or side effects of a certain drug, nor should it be used to indicate that use of a particular drug is safe, appropriate or effective for a given condition.

A patient should always consult a healthcare provider if he/she has any questions regarding the information set out in the Formulary. The information in the Formulary is not intended to act as or replace medical advice and should not be relied upon in any such regard. All uses of the Formulary are subject to clinical judgment and actual prescribing patterns may not follow the information provided in the Formulary.

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