

## Axitinib (Inlyta®)

The possible benefits of treatment vary; for some people this treatment may reduce the risk of the cancer coming back, for others it may control the cancer and its symptoms. Your doctor will explain to you whether you will receive chemotherapy or another type of treatment, or a combination of both. Your doctor or nurse will be happy to answer any questions you have about your treatment. You will find it useful to refer to the booklet 'Chemotherapy, a guide' which gives general information on chemotherapy and side effects.

### Your treatment

Your doctor has prescribed for you a course of treatment with Axitinib (Inlyta).

Axitinib is given by mouth as tablets twice a day continuously. You can remain on tablets for as long as you are benefitting from the treatment and the side effects are tolerated.

Tablets should be taken twice daily, about 12 hours apart. Try to take them at the same times each day. This will ensure that you have the right amount of Axitinib in your body throughout the day and help your treatment to work more effectively. Tablets can be taken with or without food. You should swallow the tablets whole. Do not crush or break them as this will affect how your body absorbs the treatment.

If you miss a dose:

1. and it is more than 2 hours until your next dose, take the missed dose and continue with your normal schedule
2. and it is less than 2 hours until your next dose, skip the missed dose and continue with your normal schedule.

This treatment can have serious or possibly life-threatening side effects. It is very important that you report side effects straight away. Don't delay, if you feel unwell, please ring The Christie Hotline on **0161 446 3658**. The lines are open 24 hours a day.

### Drug interactions

Some medicines interact with Axitinib, either making it less effective or more likely to cause side effects. Please check with your GP and pharmacist that any new medicines are safe, or contact us. Drugs which should be avoided include itraconazole, fluconazole, clarithromycin, erythromycin, phenytoin, carbamazepine, high dose steroids and warfarin. If you are in any doubt you should contact The Christie. Please do not drink any grapefruit juice or eat grapefruit while you are taking Axitinib. St John's Wort should also be avoided



## Possible side effects

Chemotherapy can cause many different side effects. Some are more likely to occur than others. Everyone is different and not everyone gets all the side effects. Most side effects are usually temporary, but in some rare cases they can be life-threatening. It is important to tell your hospital doctor or nurse about any side effects so they can be monitored and, where possible, treated. If your side effects are severe, you may need to stop your tablets, have a longer break from treatment, or have a dose reduction. A small number of people do not tolerate the treatment.

## Common side effects (more than 1 in 10)

### • Hypertension (high blood pressure)

This is common, but can usually be controlled by adding to or changing your anti-hypertensive medication. You may not be aware that you have high blood pressure, so you should let your nurse or doctor know if you have headaches, feel faint or dizzy, or experience an irregular, hard or rapid heartbeat. These can all be signs of high blood pressure. It is very rare for patients to experience any serious heart problems. You may be asked to visit your GP for extra blood pressure monitoring in between hospital visits.

### • Headache

You may get headaches whilst having this treatment. They should be relieved by taking paracetamol. If they become a problem, speak to your doctor.

### • Hoarseness (dysphonia)

Axitinib may cause hoarseness – this affects how your voice sounds and how loudly you can speak. Dysphonia can resolve by itself, but to relieve the discomfort you should drink plenty of water to help soothe your throat. Avoid irritants such as tobacco smoke and dry environments caused by central heating or air conditioning. Having lozenges and cough sweets may help with the discomfort. If your voice changes or if it is too uncomfortable, your doctor can adjust your dose of Axitinib.

### • Diarrhoea

Mild diarrhoea is common. Anti-diarrhoeal tablets (loperamide) can be purchased over the counter from your local pharmacy or obtained free of charge on prescription from your GP to control your symptoms. Severe diarrhoea is less common. Severe diarrhoea can stop you eating, or make you dehydrated, which can make you feel weak and dizzy. If the diarrhoea is severe or persistent contact The Christie Hotline.

### • Hand-foot syndrome (sore hands and feet)

Some people can experience reddening, swelling and peeling on the hands and feet. Simple moisturisers can help if this is mild, but if it interferes with walking or normal activities, please contact The Christie Hotline for advice. To help prevent this it is advisable to visit a chiropodist/podiatrist regularly if you are able.

### • Hypothyroidism (low thyroid levels)

We screen for this as it is quite common for patients who have treatment with Axitinib to have abnormal thyroid function tests. If your tests show that your thyroid is becoming underactive then you may be prescribed thyroid hormone replacement tablets to correct this. Physical symptoms of this include dry skin, shortness of breath, changes in your skin and hair, loss of weight or appetite, increased sensitivity to the cold and tiredness.

### • Fatigue (tiredness or weakness)

Axitinib may make you feel tired and lacking in energy, but we would not expect you to be in bed during the daytime. Try to take rest and get help with household chores. If necessary take time off work. Gentle exercise such as walking can be beneficial.

- **Mucositis (sore mouth)**

Axitinib can cause a sore mouth and ulcers. Usually this is mild and responds to mouthwashes and Bonjela. If it is severe enough to interfere with your ability to eat and drink please contact The Christie.

- **Nausea and vomiting**

This is usually mild, but if this does occur you can be prescribed some medication to help with this. If your nausea and vomiting is so severe that it interferes with your ability to tolerate fluids and diet, you will need to contact The Christie for advice.

- **Loss of appetite/altered taste/indigestion**

Axitinib may cause you to lose your appetite, and you may notice that foods do not taste the same. You will be weighed at every clinic appointment. If you continue to lose weight you may be prescribed dietary supplements to help with this. There is no treatment that helps with altered taste. If you develop indigestion you can be prescribed some medication to help with this.

- **Shortness of breath/cough**

Some patients may develop a feeling of breathlessness or a cough. If this happens, please contact The Christie so that investigations and treatment can be undertaken if required.

- **Rash**

Axitinib can make your skin more sensitive to the sun and can cause a rash. If the rash is widespread and troublesome, please contact The Christie. When going out in the sun you should wear a sun cream with a high protection factor to protect your skin. You may also be prescribed anti-histamines if the rash is itchy, and using non-perfumed moisturiser may help to soothe the skin.

## **Uncommon side effects (less than 1 in 10)**

- **Stomach pain (Warning!)**

Get medical help right away if you have any of the following side effects including: severe/persistent stomach/abdominal pain, signs of bleeding (such as bloody/black stools, vomit that looks like coffee grounds, coughing/vomiting up blood).

- **Increased risk of bleeding**

Axitinib can make you prone to bleeding. You may have bruising or bleeding, for example, from the nose, gums or in the urine. Contact The Christie if this occurs. A small number of patients have experienced serious bleeding complications.

- **Blood clots (Warning!)**

During this treatment you are more at risk of blood clots in the legs (DVT) or lungs (PE). Occasionally these clots can be life-threatening. To help prevent clots, keep mobile and drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids.

- **Dizziness**

Some patients experience dizziness whilst having this treatment.

- **Bone/muscle pain**

If this occurs please tell your doctor at The Christie as you can be prescribed some pain killers to help with this.

- **Swelling around the eyes**

If this occurs please tell your doctor at The Christie. If this is mild, no specific treatment will be required.

## • Delayed wound healing

Axitinib also delays wound healing. **The tablets will usually have to be stopped before and after surgery or dental extraction, and should not usually be taken if you have an open wound, leg ulcer or pressure sore.** Let your nurse or doctor know if any of these issues come up.

## Increased risk of serious infection

You are vulnerable to infection while you are having chemotherapy. Minor infections can become life-threatening in a matter of hours if left untreated. Symptoms of infection include fever, shivering, sweats, sore throat, diarrhoea, discomfort when you pass urine, cough or breathlessness. We recommend that you use a digital thermometer so you can check your temperature. You can buy one from your local chemist.

**If you feel unwell, you have symptoms of an infection or your temperature is 37.5°C or above, or below 36°C contact The Christie Hotline straight away.**

## Serious and potentially life threatening side effects

In a small proportion of patients chemotherapy can result in very severe side effects which may rarely result in death. The team caring for you will discuss the risk of these side effects with you.

## Sex, contraception and fertility

**Protecting your partner and contraception:** We recommend that you or your partner use a condom during sexual intercourse while you are having the course of chemotherapy. Chemotherapy is dangerous to unborn babies and this will also protect you and your partner from any chemotherapy drugs that may be present in semen and in the vagina. If you suspect that you may be pregnant please tell your doctor immediately.

**Fertility:** This chemotherapy may affect your ability to have children. Your doctor or nurse should have discussed this with you. If not, please ask them before you start treatment.

## Late side effects

Some side effects may become evident only after a number of years. In reaching any decision with you about treatment, the potential benefit you receive from treatment will be weighed against the risks of serious long term side effects to the heart, lungs, kidneys and bone marrow. With some drugs there is also a small but definite risk of developing another cancer. If any of these problems specifically applies to you, the doctor will discuss these with you and note this on your consent form.

## Contacts

If you have any general questions or concerns about your treatment, please ring the area where you are having treatment:

Administration enquiries - **0161 918 7606/7610**

For advice ring The Christie Hotline on **0161 446 3658** (24 hours)

Your consultant is: .....

Your hospital number is: .....

Your key worker is: .....

Notes:

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If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

The Christie is committed to producing high quality, evidence based information for patients. Our patient information adheres to the principles and quality statements of the Information Standard. If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact **patient.information@christie.nhs.uk**

For information and advice visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham or Salford. Opening times can vary, please check before making a special journey.



Contact The Christie Hotline for  
urgent support and specialist advice  
**The Christie Hotline: 0161 446 3658**  
Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week