

Alectinib (Alecensa®)

This leaflet is offered as a guide to you and your family. The possible benefits of treatment vary: for some people, treatment may reduce the risk of the cancer coming back, for others treatment may control the cancer and its symptoms. Your treatment will be fully explained by your doctor or nurse, who will be happy to answer any questions.

Your treatment

Your doctor has prescribed you an anti-cancer treatment called Alectinib (Alecensa®) which is a capsule and is taken by mouth.

The usual dose is 600 mg taken twice a day (morning and afternoon/evening). The capsule should be swallowed whole with water and taken with food. Do not crush, dissolve or open the capsules. If you miss a dose, do not take the missed dose, but continue with the next dose as prescribed. This dose may be reduced by your medical team if you experience severe toxicities or side effects.

While you are taking Alectinib we will review you in clinic on a regular basis. This will be every two weeks initially and then monthly follow-up.

We strongly advise current smokers to stop smoking while taking this treatment.

If you would like help with stopping smoking please let your doctor or nurse know and they can arrange support for you.

You will have a routine blood test before the start of each cycle of treatment.

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.

Possible side effects

This treatment 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.



Common side effects (may affect 1 or more in 10 people)

- **Shortness of breath (pneumonitis) (Warning!)**

This treatment can cause inflammation of the tissue in your lungs. Symptoms of this include a cough that will not settle, fever or breathing difficulties. **If you develop severe shortness of breath it is important to contact The Hotline on 0161 446 3658 straight away as this may be serious. Don't delay!**

- **Cardiac abnormalities**

Sometimes Alectinib can cause patients to experience an irregular or abnormal heartbeat or changes in the usual electrical activity of the heart as seen on an ECG (electrocardiogram). If you experience dizziness or any loss of consciousness you must inform your medical team or nurse. It is important not to drive or operate machinery if these symptoms occur.

- **Visual disturbances**

You may develop problems with your vision. These are often temporary difficulties adjusting to light and then dark surroundings or blurring of your vision. You may also experience 'flashing lights' or 'floaters' in your visual field. These side effects are usually mild. If these side effects worsen you need to inform your doctor or nurse. Be very careful when driving or operating machinery if you have any of these symptoms. Ask someone to drive for you if these symptoms are more severe.

- **Muscle pain, tenderness and weakness**

Muscle problems are common with Alectinib and can be severe. Your doctor will do regular blood tests during treatment. Tell your doctor or specialist nurse right away if you get new or worsening signs and symptoms of muscle problems, including unexplained muscle pain or muscle pain that does not go away, tenderness, or weakness.

- **Lethargy**

Some treatment may make you feel tired and lacking in energy. It can be frustrating when you feel unable to cope with routine tasks. If you do feel tired, take rest and get help with household chores. If necessary, take time off work. Gentle exercise such as walking can be beneficial.

- **Decreased appetite**

You may lose your appetite and find eating large meals more difficult. It is best to try to eat smaller portions but to carry on trying to eat something even if you do not feel very hungry. Ask your nurse or doctor for advice on what to eat if this is causing you problems or you have unexpected weight loss.

- **Nausea and vomiting**

The severity of this varies from person to person. Anti-sickness medication will be given along with your treatment if needed. If you continue to feel or be sick, contact your GP or The Christie Hotline.

- **Constipation**

This occasionally occurs in the long-term. Try to drink plenty of fluids and eat foods high in fibre. Tell your doctor who may prescribe a suitable laxative. Ask the staff for a copy of 'Eating: help yourself' which has useful ideas about diet when you are having treatment.

- **Diarrhoea**

If this becomes a problem while you are having treatment, anti-diarrhoea tablets can be bought from a pharmacy or prescribed by your GP for a temporary period until this is resolved. If the problem persists contact The Christie. If you develop severe diarrhoea it is important to contact The Christie straightaway as this may be a sign of a serious infection. Don't delay!

- **Skin rash**

You may develop a skin rash. This is usually mild and easily treated. It is most common on the face, neck, chest, and back. If the rash becomes red, painful, itchy or develops an 'acne-like' appearance please contact The Christie. Sometimes the dose may need to be changed or delayed for a week or two. If you develop any signs that the rash is infected then the medical team will start a course of antibiotics.

- **Being careful in the sun (photosensitivity)**

You must avoid spending time in the sunlight during treatment as your skin may burn more easily. You should use a high factor sun cream and lip balm (SPF 50 or above) that protects you from both UVA and UVB sunlight. This will help protect against sunburn.

- **Anaemia (low number of red blood cells)**

While having this treatment you may become anaemic. This may make you feel tired and breathless. Let your doctor or nurse know if these symptoms are a problem. You may need a blood transfusion.

- **Hyperglycaemia (high blood sugar)**

An increase in your blood sugar levels may occur. People who have diabetes are at higher risk. Your blood sugar levels should be monitored regularly. If you start urinating often and notice an increased thirst you should contact your doctor or nurse.

- **Abnormal kidney and liver function tests**

It is important to monitor how your kidneys and liver are working as there may be a mild impairment while you are having treatment. This is done by routine blood tests. It is important to drink plenty of fluids while taking this medication. Please inform your medical team or nurse straight away if you notice you have a significantly decreased urine flow, darker urine than usual, itchy skin, pain to the right side of your abdomen, excessive bleeding or bruising or any yellowing of your skin or eyes.

- **Leg swelling or oedema**

This is often mild and can be relieved by putting your feet up and resting for part of the day. If you notice the swelling is severe or causing discomfort then please inform your medical team or nurse.

Serious and potentially life threatening side effects

In a small proportion of patients anti-cancer treatment 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.

- **Increased risk of serious infection**

You are vulnerable to infection while you are on treatment. 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.

- **Chest pain**

If you experience chest pain or notice a change in your regular heartbeat please tell your doctor or nurse. Please inform your doctor if you have ever been diagnosed with any type of heart disease especially an abnormal heart rhythm. Report any episodes of fast or irregular heartbeat, very slow heartbeat chest pain, lightheadedness, dizziness, fainting, or shortness of breath to your doctor straight away.

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 on this treatment. This treatment is dangerous to unborn babies and this will also protect you and your partner from any 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 treatment may affect your ability to have children. If you have any concerns about your fertility, please discuss this with your doctor or nurse clinician before you start treatment. You should not take Alectinib if you are pregnant.

Breastfeeding

It is not known if Alectinib passes in to breast milk. Do not breastfeed whilst taking Alectinib.

Late side effects

Some side effects may become evident only after a long time. 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 apply 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:

- Secretarial / administration enquiries - **0161 446 3745** or **0161 446 8016**
- Lung cancer nurse team - **0161 918 2595**

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

Your consultant is:

Your hospital number is:

Your key worker is:

Notes:

Contact

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

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.

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We try to ensure that all our information given to patients is accurate, balanced and based on the most up-to-date scientific evidence. 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

