

## Palbociclib

This leaflet is offered as a guide to you and your family. Palbociclib is a targeted (biological) therapy. This group of drugs block the growth and spread of cancer. They target and interfere with processes in the cells that cause cancer to grow. When used to treat breast cancer, palbociclib is taken alongside hormone (endocrine) therapy.

### Your treatment

Your doctor or nurse clinician has prescribed for you a treatment called palbociclib.

The treatment is given every four weeks. Each cycle consists of:

**Palbociclib 125mg capsule daily for 21 days then a 7 day break.**

You will have a routine blood test when you come into outpatients for your capsules. These tests are required as follows:

**Cycle 1 and 2:** Day 1 and day 14 blood test

**Cycle 3 onwards:** Day 1 blood test

Occasionally we may not be able to go ahead with your treatment until your blood counts are back to a safe level. If this happens, your palbociclib may be delayed a week or the dose reduced. You should continue taking your hormone (endocrine) therapy even if your palbociclib is withheld.

**You must never take your capsules unless you have had your blood checked and been given the go-ahead by your doctor or nurse clinician.**

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

Cancer treatments 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.



## Increased risk of serious infection

You may be vulnerable to infection while you are having 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.**

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

- **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 know if these symptoms are a problem. You may need a blood transfusion.

- **Neutropenia (low number of white blood cells)**

While having this treatment you may become neutropenic. You may not be aware of this or feel any different but can be more susceptible to infections. You may need a deferral from treatment or a reduction in your dose.

- **Bruising or bleeding**

This treatment can reduce the production of platelets which help the blood clot. Let your doctor know if you have any unexplained bruising or bleeding, such as nosebleeds, bloodspots or rashes on the skin, and bleeding gums. You may need a platelet transfusion.

- **Lethargy**

Some treatments may make you feel tired and lacking in energy. It can be frustrating when you feel unable to cope with routine tasks. You may benefit from additional support during your treatment. Complementary therapies may be helpful. Speak to your nurse or doctor for further information. If necessary, take time off work. Gentle exercise, such as walking, can be beneficial.

- **Sore mouth**

Your mouth may become sore or dry, or you may notice small mouth ulcers during this treatment. Drinking plenty of fluids and cleaning your teeth regularly and gently with a soft toothbrush can help to reduce the risk of this happening. We can prescribe a mouthwash for you to use during treatment. You can dilute this with water if your mouth is sore. Ask your doctor or nurse for further advice. There is also general mouth care information in the chemotherapy booklet. If you continue to have a sore mouth, contact The Christie Hotline.

- **Strange taste**

Occasionally during treatment you may experience a strange taste, sometimes described as metallic or bitter. A strongly flavoured sweet or mint will help to disguise this.

- **Diarrhoea (Warning!)**

If this becomes a problem at any point during your treatment, please contact The Christie Hotline on 0161 446 3658 for advice. **If you develop severe diarrhoea, it is important to contact The Christie straight away as this may be a sign of a serious infection. Don't delay!**

- **Nausea and vomiting (sickness)**

The severity of this varies from person to person. If you feel or are sick, contact your GP or this hospital to get some anti-sickness medication.

- **Sore eyes**

You may get a dry, gritty feeling in your eyes following treatment. If this happens, using Hypromellose eye drops will help to ease the discomfort. If the problem persists, or you get blurred vision, contact this hospital. Your eyes may also water. This will improve in time and needs no specific treatment.

- **Hair thinning**

Some hair loss may occur during treatment, including body and facial hair. It is advisable to avoid perms, colours, and use of hot brushes and frequent washing that could increase hair loss. Please remember that this is a temporary side effect and your hair will grow back when your treatment is completed. Very rarely, hair loss may be permanent.

The Maggie's Centre runs a Talking Heads hair loss workshop for anyone who is anticipating or experiencing hair loss (both men and women). These sessions cover the practicalities of hair loss as well as offering support with its emotional impact. Contact Maggie's on **0161 641 4848** or email [Manchester@maggiescentres.org](mailto:Manchester@maggiescentres.org).

- **Skin rash**

You may develop a skin rash. This is usually mild and easily treated. Please tell your doctor on your next visit.

- **Liver problems**

This treatment can occasionally cause abnormal liver blood tests. This is rarely very severe, but your liver function will be monitored every time you come to the clinic for your treatment.

## **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 receiving treatment. The treatment may be 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.

## **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**
- Chemotherapy nurse        **0161 918 7171**
- Clinical trials unit         **0161 918 7663**

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

Your consultant is: .....

Your hospital number is: .....

Your key worker is: .....

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

