

## Ibrutinib (Imbruvica<sup>®</sup>)

This leaflet is offered as a guide to you and your family. Ibrutinib is a type of anti-cancer treatment called a targeted therapy. The aim of this treatment is to slow down the progression of the cancer and its symptoms. Your doctor or nurse will be happy to answer any questions you may have about your treatment.

### Your treatment

Your doctor or nurse clinician has prescribed for you a treatment which is called Ibrutinib or Imbruvica<sup>®</sup>. This treatment works by blocking Brutons tyrosine kinase, a protein in the body that helps these cancer cells grown and survive. By blocking this protein, Ibrutinib helps kill and reduce the number of cancer cells. It also slows down the cancer worsening.

This drug is used in **Mantle cell lymphoma (MCL), Chronic lymphocytic leukaemia (CLL) and Waldenstroms macroglobulinaemia**

Ibrutinib is taken as a tablet, swallowed whole, with a glass of water. You should aim to take it at the same time every day. Ibrutinib should not be taken with grapefruit juice or Seville oranges (bitter oranges). Ibrutinib comes in 140mg hard capsules. The dose will vary depending on the reason you are taking it. Your nurse or doctor will tell you your dose at the end of this leaflet.

You will have a routine blood test before the start of each cycle of treatment. 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 chemotherapy may be delayed a week.

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.

### Increased risk of serious infection

You are vulnerable to infection while you are having this 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. A normal temperature is between 36°C and 37°C.

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

## Possible side effects

This treatment can cause many different side effects. Some are more likely to occur than others. We are all different, so we may get different side effects with varying severity. 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.

### Very common side effects (more than 1 in 10)

- **Dizziness**

- **Lung Infections**

If you develop any shortness of breath, or difficulty in breathing then please inform your haematology team.

- **Bleeding & Bruising**

Tell your doctor or nurse if you have any signs of bleeding, such as, blood in your stools, pink or brown urine, blood stained vomit, coughing up blood or any other signs of bleeding from anywhere else. If you also have unexplained bruising or an increase in bruising then please inform your haematology team.

- **Changes in number of white blood cells**

Ibrutinib can initially increase the number of white cells in the blood as a result of abnormal white cells moving from the tissues into the blood stream. This will be monitored but usually decreases over time. Ibrutinib can also reduce the number of white blood cells being made in the bone marrow. White blood cells are our bodies defence system and fight off any infection. You may need to have your dose of Ibrutinib reduced if this occurs and look out for signs of infection. Your haematology team will do regular blood checks to monitor your white blood count, and other counts.

### Less Common side effects (more than 1 in 100)

- **Severe infections**

It is important that you check your temperature regularly whilst taking Ibrutinib. If your temperature is 37.5°C or above or below 36 °C or you have symptoms of an infection, don't delay-call straight away!

- **Abnormal heart rate**

In some patients, Ibrutinib can cause heart rhythm problems. If you feel any symptoms such as your heart is beating fast and irregular, light headedness, dizziness, shortness of breath or chest discomfort you must tell your haematology team.

- **Low white blood cell counts**

There is a risk of infection or shingles.

- **Blurred vision**

- **Dry mouth**

- **Dehydration**

You may not have enough fluid in your body and feel dehydrated. Try to drink plenty of fluid whilst you are having this treatment.

- **High levels of uric acid**

You may have high levels of uric acid in your bloodstream which may cause gout. This is a sudden attack of severe pain in one or more joints, usually your big toe joint.

- **Mucositis (sore mouth and mouth ulcers)**

Ibrutinib can cause a sore mouth and mouth ulcers. Usually this is mild and responds to mouth washes. If it is severe enough to stop you eating and drinking normally, please contact The Christie.

- **Headaches or feeling dizzy**

- **Changes in bowel habits**

This treatment can cause indigestion, constipation, diarrhoea, nausea, abdominal pain and an increase or decrease in appetite and weight. It is important to drink plenty of fluids and maintain a balanced diet. Please report to your nurse or doctor if you develop any of these symptoms. If you have abdominal pain with nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea, contact The Hotline immediately. You may be given medication to help with any of these side effects.

- **Nausea or vomiting**

The severity of this varies from person to person. Anti-sickness medication may be given along with your treatment to prevent this. You may also be given anti-sickness tablets to take at home. If you continue to feel or be sick, contact your GP or this hospital, because your anti-sickness medication may need to be changed or increased.

- **Skin rashes**

Some people can get a rash when receiving Ibrutinib. The rash may be itchy and need treatment with antihistamines and/or steroid creams.

- **Painful joints or muscle cramps**

Pain in the joints (also called arthralgia) or muscles (also called myalgia) can be a temporary side effect while having this treatment. It is important to tell your doctor or nurse about this, so that appropriate painkillers can be prescribed.

### **Uncommon side effects (less than 1 in 1000)**

- **Allergic reaction, sometimes severe, that may include a swollen face, lip, mouth, tongue or throat, difficulty swallowing or breathing.**

- **Tumour Lysis Syndrome (TLS)**

Unusual levels of chemicals in the blood caused by the fast breakdown of cancer cells.

- **Severely increased white blood cell count that causes them to 'clump' together.** Symptoms include fever and a high temperature.

- **Irregular heart beat and involuntary muscle contractions or twitching**

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## Sex, contraception & 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 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:** 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:

- Haematology day unit **0161 446 3924**
- Lymphoma clinical nurse specialists **0161 446 8573**
- Lymphoma secretaries **0161 446 3753** Professor Radford/Dr Linton  
**0161 446 3360** Professor Illidge  
**0161 446 3956** Dr Smith  
**0161 446 3332** Professor Cowan  
**0161 446 3302** Dr Harris/Dr Chan  
**0161 446 3869** Dr Bloor
- Palatine Treatment Ward **0161 446 3960/3961**
- General enquiries **0161 446 3000**

Your consultant is: .....

Your hospital number is: .....

Your key worker is: .....

Disease Group	Daily dose	
Mantle Cell Lymphoma (MCL)	560mg FOUR CAPSULES	ONCE DAILY
Chronic Lymphocytic Leukaemia (CLL)	420MG THREE CAPSULES	ONCE DAILY
Waldenstroms Macroglobulinaemia (WM)	420MG THREE CAPSULES	ONCE DAILY

**Please note doses may be adjusted.  
Your nurse or doctor should tell you which dose you are taking.**

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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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

The Christie NHS Foundation Trust  
Wilmslow Road  
Withington  
Manchester M20 4BX  
Tel: 0161 446 3000  
[www.christie.nhs.uk](http://www.christie.nhs.uk)

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