

# Lenvatinib (Lenvima®) for thyroid carcinoma

Lenvatinib (Lenvima®) is a systemic anti-cancer therapy. This group of drugs stops cancer cells from growing. The possible benefits of treatment vary; for some people anti-cancer therapy may reduce the risk of the cancer coming back, for others it may control the cancer and its symptoms. Your doctor or nurse will be happy to answer any questions you have about your treatment.

## Your treatment

Your doctor has prescribed a course of treatment, called Lenvatinib. Lenvatinib is taken by mouth and is taken every day without a break.

This treatment can be continued for as long as you are benefitting from it and the side effects are tolerated.

Your tablets should be taken daily at about the same time every day.

Lenvatinib can be taken with or without food. Swallow the capsule whole with water. Do not open, crush or chew the capsule.

If you forget to take your tablets, take the missed tablet as soon as you remember. However, if it is less than 12 hours until your next dose, skip the missed dose and take your next dose at the normal time.

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 Lenvatinib, 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 your Christie team.

### • Increased risk of serious infections

Minor infections can become life-threatening if left untreated. Symptoms of infection include fever, shivering, sweats, sore throat, and 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 on the number above straight away.



## Possible side effects

Lenvatinib 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 cases they can be life-threatening.

It is important to tell your Christie doctor or nurse about any side effects so they can be monitored and, where possible, treated. If side effects are severe, you may need to stop your treatment, have a break from treatment, or have a dose reduction. A small number of people do not tolerate treatment.

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

### • Urinary tract infections

Mild urinary infections are common. These can be treated with a course of antibiotic tablets. If you have burning sensation or pain when you pass urine or the urine has a foul odour please contact The Christie Hotline.

### • Decreased appetite and weight loss

We advise you to try to eat and drink as normal. We will monitor your weight at outpatient appointments.

### • Indigestion and change in taste

Some patients experience indigestion. Please contact your hospital team for clinical advice. Indigestion tablets may be prescribed by your team or your GP. Patients may also experience a change in how food and drink tastes.

### • Unexpected bleeding

Patients have reported being easily bruised or have noticed bleeding from the nose, gums or blood in the urine. A small number of patients have experienced serious bleeding complications. Please contact The Christie Hotline if you experience any of the following: coughing up blood or blood clots, vomiting blood or brown ('coffee granules') liquid, black bowel motions or menstrual bleeding that is heavier than usual.

### • Hypertension (high blood pressure) or hypotension (low blood pressure)

Your blood pressure is measured at each appointment. If you develop high blood pressure, the team will discuss commencing medication to control your blood pressure. Occasionally, we will need to stop your Lenvatinib if your blood pressure remains uncontrolled despite medication.

### • Diarrhoea

Mild diarrhoea is common. Anti-diarrhoeal tablets (loperamide) can be prescribed to control your symptoms. Severe diarrhoea is less common. If you develop diarrhoea with an increase in stool frequency of four or more times above your normal daily bowel function, please contact The Christie Hotline.

### • Nausea and vomiting

If you feel sick, you can be prescribed anti-sickness medication.

### • Mucositis (sore mouth and mouth ulcers)

Lenvatinib can cause a sore mouth and mouth ulcers. Usually this is mild and clears with mouth washes. If it is preventing you from eating and drinking normally, please contact The Christie Hotline.

### • Constipation

Mild constipation is common. Laxatives can be prescribed to control your symptoms. Severe constipation is less common. If you develop abdominal pain with constipation, please contact The Christie Hotline.

- **Tiredness**

Lenvatinib may make you feel tired and lacking in energy, but it should not affect your daily routine. Try to take rest and get help with household chores. If necessary, take time off work. Gentle exercise such as walking can be beneficial.

- **Hand/foot skin reaction**

Some people can experience reddening and peeling of the skin on the hands and feet. Simple moisturisers can help if this is mild, but if it interferes with walking or normal use of hands or fingers, please contact The Christie.

- **Hair changes**

Some hair loss may occur during treatment, including body and facial hair. Avoid perms, colours, use of hot brushes and vigorous 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. If you would like an appointment with the wig service, this can be arranged for you by visiting the cancer information centre. It is a good idea to get your wig before you lose a lot of hair which you can then match to your natural colour. Ask the staff for a copy of the 'Wig fitting service at The Christie'.

The Maggie's Centre runs a Talking Heads hair loss support 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)

- **Generalised aches and leg swelling**

You may experience mild back pain or muscle pain in your arms or legs. Some patients experience mild leg swelling. Painkillers can be prescribed for your pain. Contact The Christie Hotline if your pain is not controlled.

- **A low level of calcium or potassium in your blood**

Your levels will be routinely monitored during treatment.

- **Protein in urine (proteinuria)**

You will have regular urine tests. Sometimes the dose of the Lenvatinib is adjusted or the treatment is stopped if you have too much protein in your urine.

- **Headaches**

Some patients may experience mild headaches or dizziness with the treatment. It is rare to have a severe headache. You should seek emergency medical attention if you develop a sudden severe headache, arm or leg weakness.

- **Change in voice**

You may develop a quieter voice or your voice may become hoarse.

## **Less common side effects (less than 1 in 10)**

- **Chest pain or stroke or blood clots in the lung (Warning!)**

Patients receiving Lenvatinib may experience chest pain (angina) or a heart attack. Other complications such as a stroke or mini-stroke or blood clots in the lung can also happen. If you develop chest pain or sudden onset of breathlessness or neurological symptoms, you should seek emergency medical attention.

- **Liver and kidney problems**

This medication can affect the way your liver and kidneys function. We will monitor this on a regular basis.

- **Fistula**

This is an abnormal connection between different organs in the body or between the skin and an underlying structure such as the throat or windpipe. The symptoms depend on where the fistula is located. Anal fistulas for example, can cause anal discharge. Other types of fistula are rare. Talk to your Christie team if you experience any new or unusual symptoms such as coughing when swallowing.

## **Rare side effects (less than 1 in 100)**

- **Neurological (brain) disorder (Warning!)**

Lenvatinib can cause a rare condition affecting the brain, called Reversible Posterior Leukoencephalopathy Syndrome (RPLS). If you experience headaches, disturbances in your vision, confusion or seizures then please seek urgent medical attention.

- **A tear in your stomach or intestinal wall (perforation) (Warning!)**

This is an uncommon side effect. If you develop severe stomach pain, vomiting blood or passing blood in the stools, please seek emergency medical attention.

## **Serious and potentially life-threatening side effects**

In a proportion of patients, anti-cancer therapy can result in very severe side effects which rarely results in death. The team caring for you will discuss the risk of these side effects with you.

## **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 apply to you, the doctor will discuss these with you and note this on your consent form.

## **Sex, contraception and fertility**

**Contraception:** We recommend that you or your partner use a condom during sexual intercourse whilst you are having the course of treatment and for one month after treatment. Lenvatinib may have unwanted effects on unborn babies. If you suspect that you may be pregnant please tell your doctor immediately.

**Fertility:** This treatment 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.

## Contacts

If you have any general questions or concerns about your treatment, please contact the thyroid team.

Administration enquiries - **0161 446 3331**

Clinical nurse specialist, Debbie Elliott - **0161 446 8041**

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

Your consultant is: .....

Your hospital number is: .....

Your key worker is: .....

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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