

# Everolimus (Afinitor<sup>®</sup>)

## for pancreatic neuroendocrine tumours

This leaflet is offered as a guide to you and your family. The possible benefits of treatment vary; for some people chemotherapy 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 a course of treatment with everolimus. This is taken by mouth once a day without a break. This treatment can be repeated for as long as you are benefitting from it, and the side effects are tolerated.

Method of administration:

- Everolimus tablets should be taken orally once daily at the same time every day consistently, either with or without food. Everolimus tablets should be swallowed whole with a glass of water. The tablets should not be chewed or crushed.
- **If you miss a dose:** and it is **less** than 12 hours until your next dose, skip the missed dose and continue with your normal schedule.
- The blister pack containing the everolimus tablets should be opened only when you are about to take them as they sensitive to light and air.

**Store your medicine in a cool, dry place, out of reach of children.**

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 everolimus, 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. Drugs which should be avoided include itraconazole, fluconazole, clarithromycin, erythromycin, high dose steroids, diltiazem, verapamil, rifampicin, rifabutin, carbamazepine, warfarin and phenytoin. Live vaccines should also be avoided. If you are in any doubt you should contact The Christie Hotline on the number above.

**Please do not eat grapefruit, Seville oranges, or star fruit or drink their juices whilst you are taking everolimus. St John's Wort should also be avoided.**

## **Risk of infection**

You are vulnerable to infection while you are having everolimus. 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.**

## **Possible side effects**

Everolimus 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 (more than 1 in 10)**

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

Everolimus can cause a sore mouth and 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.

- **Rash**

Everolimus may make you more sensitive to the sun and can cause a rash. If this is widespread, please contact The Christie. Sit in the shade, avoid too much sun and use a high factor sunblock cream. You may take anti-histamines if the rash is itchy, and you may use non-perfumed moisturising cream to soothe the skin.

- **Diarrhoea**

Mild diarrhoea is common. Anti-diarrhoeal tablets (loperamide) can be prescribed 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.

- **Tiredness or fatigue**

Everolimus 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. Taking your tablets at bedtime instead of after breakfast can help.

- **Delayed wound healing**

Everolimus 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 occur.

- **Anaemia**

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

- **Raised blood sugar**

If you are a diabetic, you may notice that your blood sugar readings are higher than usual. Please discuss this with your doctor if it occurs. Your diabetes medication may need to be reviewed.

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

- **Prone to bleeding**

Everolimus 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 Hotline if this occurs. A small number of patients have experienced serious bleeding complications.

- **Nausea and vomiting**

This is not a common problem but, if this does occur, you can be prescribed some anti-sickness tablets by your doctor.

- **Pneumonitis (breathlessness)**

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

- **Fluid retention (swelling of the ankles)**

Sometimes everolimus may cause your feet/legs to become swollen. If this is mild, no specific treatment is needed. Keeping your feet and legs raised may help. Tell your doctor if the swelling is severe.

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

- **Raised cholesterol**

Your cholesterol level may become raised whilst you are taking everolimus. This is checked on regular occasions when you visit The Christie. Your doctor will advise if any treatment is necessary.

- **Reactivation of hepatitis**

There have been rare reports of reactivation of viral hepatitis (for example, hepatitis B or C). Please tell your doctor if you have ever been diagnosed with hepatitis.

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

In a small proportion of patients anti-cancer therapy 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.

### **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.

## 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 everolimus, and for 8 weeks following treatment. Anti-cancer drugs may be 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:** Everolimus 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 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.

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**

© 2017 The Christie NHS Foundation Trust. This document may be copied for use within the NHS only on the condition that The Christie NHS Foundation Trust is acknowledged as the creator.

For more information about The Christie and our services, please visit **www.christie.nhs.uk** or visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham or Salford.

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

The Christie Patient Information Service  
April 2018 - Review July 2020

