

Everolimus (Breast)

This leaflet is offered as a guide to you and your family. Everolimus is a treatment which interferes with the way a protein called mTOR works. The protein mTOR makes cells divide and grow and it is often overactive in cancer cells. Everolimus is used to block the mTOR protein which helps to stop the cancer growing or slow it down.

Your treatment

Your doctor has prescribed a course of treatment with everolimus. This is taken by mouth once a day and is taken every day without a break. This treatment can be repeated for as long as you are benefitting from it, and the side effects are tolerated.

Your capsules should be taken daily at about the same time every day. You should take them with a glass of water. Do not crush or chew the capsules. You can take them with or without water. If you miss a dose:

1. and it is **more** than 12 hours until your next dose, take the missed dose and continue with your normal schedule
2. 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 capsules should be opened only when you are about to take them as they can be affected by both light and air.

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, or contact us. Drugs which should be avoided include itraconazole, fluconazole, clarithromycin, erythromycin, high dose steroids, diltiazem, verapamil, rifampicin, rifabutin, carbamazepine, warfarin and phenytoin. If you are in any doubt you should contact The Christie.

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.

Everolimus contains lactose. If you are lactose intolerance please speak to your doctor or nurse clinician.

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.

- **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.

Common side effects (more than 1 in 10)

- **Strange taste**

Everolimus can leave a strange, metallic taste in your mouth. It can also make food seem tasteless and bland. Normal taste will usually come back after the treatment finishes. Ask the staff for dietary booklets which you may find helpful.

- **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. 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 Hotline.

- **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. If necessary take time off work. Gentle exercise such as walking can be beneficial and complementary therapies may be helpful. Ask your nurse or doctor for further information. Taking your capsules at bedtime instead of after breakfast can help.

- **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.

- **Headaches**

If you start to experience headaches on treatment, please discuss this with your doctor or nurse clinician.

- **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 hotline so that investigations and treatment can be undertaken.

- **Raised cholesterol**

Your cholesterol level may become raised whilst you are taking everolimus.

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.

- **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.

- **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.

- **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. If you have any associated pain or redness, contact the hospital straightaway.

- **Sore eyes**

You may experience red or dry eyes. If this happens or persists, contact your GP or doctor at The Christie to discuss the use of eye drops.

Rare side effects (less than 1 in 100)

- **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.



- **Blood clots**

During treatment you are more at risk of blood clots in the legs (DVT) or lungs (PE). Occasionally these clots can be life-threatening. To help prevent clots, keep mobile and drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids.

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. 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.

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**
- Breast care nurses **0161 446 3996**

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

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For 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

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