

# Cabozantinib (Cometriq®)

For medullary thyroid carcinoma

Cabozantinib is a type of anti-cancer treatment called a targeted therapy. The aim of this treatment is to control 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 has prescribed a course of treatment, called cabozantinib (Cometriq®). Cabozantinib 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. It is important to take your tablets on an empty stomach (do not eat for at least two hours before and at least one hour after taking Cometriq®). Swallow the capsule whole with a full glass of water. Do not open, crush or chew the capsule. If you forget to take your tablets, and it is 12 hours or more until your next dose is due, take the missed tablet as soon as you remember. 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 cabozantinib, 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, ketoconazole, rifampicin, clarithromycin, erythromycin, carbamazepine and warfarin; there are others so if you are in any doubt you should contact The Christie. Please do not drink any grapefruit juice or eat grapefruit while you are taking Cabozantinib. St John's Wort should also be avoided.

## Possible side effects

Cabozantinib 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. If side effects are severe, you may need to stop your tablets, 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)

- **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 baseline daily bowel function, 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 the outpatient appointments.

- **Nausea and vomiting**

If these symptoms occur, you can be prescribed anti-sickness medication.

- **Tiredness**

Cabozantinib 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.

- **Hypertension (high blood pressure)**

Your blood pressure will be checked at each clinic appointment. If you develop hypertension, the team will discuss commencing medication to control your blood pressure. Occasionally, we will need to stop your cabozantinib if your blood pressure remains uncontrolled despite medication. It is rare for patients to experience any serious heart problems.

- **Indigestion and change in taste**

Some patients experience indigestion and which can be treated with tablets. Patients may also experience a change in how food and drink tastes.

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

Cabozantinib 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.

- **Hair thinning**

Some hair thinning may occur during treatment, including body and facial hair. It is advisable to 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)

- **Delayed wound healing**

Cabozantinib may delay 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.** Please inform your doctor or dentist that you are taking cabozantinib and alert The Christie thyroid team of any planned medical or dental procedures so they can advise about stopping cabozantinib.

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

- **Liver and kidney problems**

This medication can affect the way your liver and kidneys function. We will monitor this on a regular basis. Rarely, your kidneys may leak protein and we may need to stop the treatment.

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

Your calcium levels will be routinely monitored during treatment.

- **Severe jaw bone problems (osteonecrosis)**

Symptoms may include jaw pain, toothache or sore gums. Maintaining good dental hygiene during treatment is important. You should inform your dentist that you are taking cabozantinib before any dental work is planned.

- **Prone to bleeding**

Some patients have reported bruising or bleeding, for example, from the nose, gums or 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.

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

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

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

- **Chest pain or stroke (Warning!)**

A small number of patients receiving cabozantinib may experience chest pain (angina) or, rarely, a heart attack. Other complications such as a stroke or mini-stroke can also happen but are rare. If you develop chest pain or sudden onset of neurological symptoms, you should seek emergency medical attention.

- **Neurological (brain) disorder**

Cabozantinib 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.

- **Increased risk of serious infection**

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

## Serious and potentially life-threatening side effects

In a small 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 applies to you, the doctor will discuss these with you and note this on your consent form.

## 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 having this 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:** 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: .....

Notes:

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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