

Fruquintinib (Fruzaqla®)

Fruquintinib (Fruzaqla®) is a type of anti-cancer treatment called a targeted therapy which stops tumours from making new blood vessels and therefore slows down the growth of cancer. The aim of this treatment is to control the cancer and its symptoms. Your clinician will be happy to answer any questions you may have about your treatment.

Your treatment

Your clinician has prescribed for you a treatment which includes the capsule medication fruquintinib (also called Fruzaqla®). Fruquintinib is taken by mouth once a day and is taken every day for 21 days followed by a 7-day break.

Fruquintinib capsules are available in 2 different strengths, so you may receive 2 different boxes of medication.

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

Your medication should be taken daily at about the same time. Timing is not dependent on meals, and it is better to take the capsules either in the morning or evening.

If you miss a dose, you will just need to take your next dose when it is due. You should 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.

Interactions

Fruquintinib can interact (either making it less effective or more likely to cause side effects) with certain medicines, herbal products, and some food and drinks. We are unable to list all possible interactions. Tell your healthcare team about any medicines you are taking. This includes vitamins, herbal supplements and over the counter remedies. Also let them know of any other medical conditions or allergies you may have.



Flu vaccinations

Is it safe for me to have a flu jab during the time I am having chemotherapy? It's safe to have a flu jab, but depending on the sort of chemotherapy you have had, it may not give quite as much protection as usual. Some patients may need 2 vaccinations. However, if you are thinking of having any other vaccinations, do check with your Christie doctor first, because some vaccines should be avoided.

COVID-19 vaccinations

We advise that all patients receive a COVID-19 vaccination when this is offered. Your doctor will discuss with you the best time to have this.

Possible side effects

Fruquintinib 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 clinician about any side effects so they can be monitored and, where possible, treated.

Common side effects (more than 1 in 10)

• Hypertension (high blood pressure)

High blood pressure is common with fruquintinib - you will need your blood pressure checking throughout your treatment. It is rare to experience any severe problems due to this, but you may be started on medications to keep it under control if needed.

• Diarrhoea

Diarrhoea is a common side effect of your treatment. If you have watery diarrhoea, you should take the anti-diarrhoea treatment called loperamide immediately. Follow the instructions given with your medication and the directions below.

Instructions: Take 2 loperamide capsules/tablets as soon as the first liquid stool occurs. Then take 1 capsule/tablet with each loose stool thereafter (maximum loperamide in a day is 8 capsules/tablets, however some patients with a stoma may require more than this to control output).

If you have a stoma or notice loperamide capsules in your stoma output, you should ask for loperamide tablets rather than capsules.

If the diarrhoea continues for more than 24 hours despite taking the loperamide, please contact The Christie Hotline on **0161 446 3658** for advice.

• Protein in the urine

This can occur due to the effects of fruquintinib on the kidneys. It doesn't normally cause symptoms but requires careful monitoring. Before each cycle of treatment, you will have your urine tested for protein. If protein is identified, you may need to have a 24-hour urine collection to assess how well your kidneys are working. Treatment may be interrupted until the protein found in the urine has resolved.

• Loss of appetite and weight loss

Fruquintinib can cause your appetite to reduce, and you may lose weight; however, we will monitor your weight at each clinic appointment. If you experience a loss of appetite, please be sure to tell your clinician at your next hospital visit. Ask staff for a copy of The Christie booklet 'Eating - help yourself' which contains useful suggestions about diet.

• Change in voice

Some people find that their voice changes in tone or becomes a little hoarse while having fruquintinib. This is not a cause for concern and should settle when treatment is stopped.

- **Hypothyroidism**

This means that your thyroid gland may become underactive. We test for this as it is quite common for patients who stay on fruquintinib to have abnormal thyroid function blood tests. If your tests are abnormal, you may be prescribed thyroid hormone replacement tablets to correct this. If left untreated, this would make you tired and sensitive to the cold.

- **Prone to bleeding**

Fruquintinib 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. Please discuss any blood thinning medications with your clinician.

- **Altered liver/kidney function blood tests**

This medication can affect the way your liver and kidney function. We will monitor this on a regular basis. It is usually mild but can rarely cause more serious problems.

- **Stomach pain**

Get medical help straight away if you have any of the following side effects: severe or persistent stomach/abdominal pain; signs of bleeding such as bloody/black stools; vomit that looks like coffee grounds or coughing or vomiting up blood.

- **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 your team at The Christie. Try to keep your hands and feet cool, and if possible uncovered or wear loose-fitting cotton socks. Some treatments can make your skin more sensitive to the sun than usual. Avoid too much sun by sitting in the shade and using a high factor sunblock cream.

- **Tiredness**

Fruquintinib 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.

- **Muscle and joint pains**

Fruquintinib can cause pains in the muscles and joints. Inform your treating team if this occurs. Simple pain relief such as paracetamol can be used to help with the pain. If the pain becomes severe you may require an interruption to your treatment, or a reduction in the dose.

Uncommon side effects (less than 1 in 10)

• Blood clots

You are more at risk of developing a blood clot while on this treatment, either in the legs, called a deep vein thrombosis (DVT), or in the lungs, called a pulmonary thrombosis (PE). It is very important that if you have any swelling, tenderness or pain around the calf muscle in your lower leg that you phone The Christie Hotline on **0161 446 3658** for advice. If you get sudden onset chest pain or shortness of breath you should dial **999** immediately. If you do develop a blood clot you will need to have treatment to thin your blood and dissolve the clot.

• Perforated gut

Rarely, patients experience severe pain caused by a hole forming in the lining of the gut. The sudden onset of severe abdominal pain should therefore be investigated urgently by contacting **999** immediately. Rarely a hole can form which joins 2 parts of the body which wouldn't normally be connected. For example, a hole between the bowel and either the vagina or bladder could cause faeces to be passed from the bowel to the vagina or bladder when urinating.

Increased risk of serious infection

You can be more vulnerable to infection while you are having anti-cancer treatment. Minor infections can become life threatening quickly 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, if you have symptoms of an infection or if your temperature is 37.5°C or above, or below 36°C contact The Christie Hotline straight away.

Reversible swelling of the brain (posterior reversible encephalopathy syndrome/ PRES).

Fruquintinib can cause a reversible swelling of the brain called PRES. If you experience any of the following symptoms you must seek medical attention immediately: headache, confusion, seizures (fits), and changes in vision with or without high blood pressure.

Inflammation of the pancreas

Fruquintinib can cause inflammation of the pancreas, also known as pancreatitis. This may present as pain in the abdominal area, nausea, vomiting and fever. If you experience any of these symptoms you must seek medical attention immediately.

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.

Delayed wound healing

Fruquintinib can affect the healing process of wounds, making them take longer to heal, including after dental procedures. Inform your oncology team before undergoing any surgical or dental procedures.

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 damage.

Sex, contraception and fertility

Protecting your partner and contraception: We recommend that you or your partner use a barrier form of contraception during sexual intercourse while you are having this treatment as fruquintinib 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.

Breast feeding: Tell your clinician if you are breast-feeding or planning to breast-feed. It is unknown if fruquintinib passes into breast milk, and a risk to neonates/infants cannot be excluded. You should not breast-feed during treatment with this medicine and for at least 2 weeks following the last dose of fruquintinib. Talk to your doctor about the best way to feed your baby during this time.

Additional information

Colouring agents which may cause allergic reactions are contained in the capsules. The 1mg capsules contain tartrazine (E102) and sunset yellow FCF (E110). The 5mg capsules contain Allura red AC (E129). Please inform your clinician if you have a known allergy to any of the ingredients of the capsules.

Contacts

If you have any general questions or concerns about your treatment, please ring:

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 a day, 7 days a week)

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 **the-christie.patient.information@nhs.net**

For information and advice visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham, Salford or Macclesfield. 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