

## Encorafenib and Cetuximab (colorectal)

Encorafenib and cetuximab are targeted (biological) therapies. This group of drugs blocks the growth and spread of cancer. They target and interfere with processes in the cells that cause cancer to grow. Your doctor will explain this treatment to you and its side effects. Your doctor, clinic nurse or pharmacist will be happy to answer any questions you have about your treatment.

### Your treatment

Encorafenib is used to treat a type of skin cancer called malignant melanoma. There is increasing evidence which supports its use in treating colorectal (bowel) cancer in combination with the bowel cancer drug cetuximab. Your doctor will have read information from medical publications supporting its use, and may have taken advice from other experts.

Encorafenib is taken continuously as an oral capsule, whilst cetuximab is given by a drip and is administered every 2 weeks.

### Encorafenib:

You should continue to take the medication without interruption unless advised by your doctor or if you develop any significant side-effects whilst taking it. Your doctor will monitor your progress regularly while you are on this medication.

- This medicine should be swallowed whole with a full glass of water. It may be taken with or without food.
- Encorafenib is to be taken once daily in the morning.
- If you forget to take your encorafenib you may take it when you remember as long as it is not less than 12 hours before your next dose of encorafenib.
- If you experience an episode of vomiting after administration of the capsules, we advise that you do not take an additional dose and should take the next scheduled dose.

Grapefruit and grapefruit juice can interact with encorafenib and should be avoided.

### Cetuximab:

Day 1: Cetuximab by drip over 2 hours for the first 2 doses.

Subsequent doses may be given over 1 hour.

Treatment is most commonly repeated every **2 weeks**.

You will need to have regular blood tests while receiving these medications, and an ECG before starting treatment and at regular intervals thereafter.

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.



## Please tell your doctor if you:

- Have liver or kidney problems
- Have eye problems
- Are taking other medications (page 5)

## Possible side effects

Some side effects are more likely to occur than others. We are all different so we may get different side effects with varying severity. Some side effects are serious and potentially life-threatening. It is important to tell your treating team about any side effects so they can be monitored and treated. Most are temporary and can be managed. Below is a list of possible side effects that can occur. This is a guide only and not an exhaustive list.

## Serious and potentially life-threatening side effects

In a small proportion of patients this treatment 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.

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

### • Skin changes

The commonest reaction is an acne-like rash that can commonly affect the face, back, chest and arms. The rash often starts within the first 3 weeks of treatment and in most patients has settled down by 12 weeks after the treatment has started. You will be prescribed emollients to moisturise the skin, along with steroid creams and tablet antibiotics which often help to reduce the severity of the rash. Using a sunscreen with high UV protection can also help. Sometimes the cetuximab may not be given for 1 - 2 weeks to allow the skin to improve.

Patients who continue on cetuximab for long periods of time sometimes complain of itching, dry skin. Other skin changes which you may experience include:

- a rash
- thickening of the palms of the hands and soles of the feet; this may be associated with a tingling sensation
- if you notice a change in an existing skin mole, or develop a new concerning skin lesion you should discuss it with the medical team.

### • Nail changes/ infections

Pain and redness at the edges of finger or toenails can be a sign of infection and will require treatment with antibiotics.

### • Nausea, vomiting and loss of appetite

If you experience nausea or vomiting, anti-sickness medication can be given to prevent this. Please inform your doctor or The Christie Hotline if these symptoms don't improve with anti-sickness treatment. If you lose your appetite, try eating small meals. If you are losing weight you might need to see a dietitian or ask your medical team for further advice. Ask the staff for a copy of The Christie booklet 'Eating - help yourself' which has useful ideas about diet when you are having treatment.

### • Diarrhoea (Warning!)

Diarrhoea is a common side effect of your treatment. It is therefore important to remain well hydrated by drinking water. If you have watery diarrhoea you should immediately take the anti-diarrhoea treatment that the doctor has prescribed for you. This is loperamide dispensed by The Christie Pharmacy. Follow the doctor's instructions **EXACTLY**:

Take 2 loperamide capsules as soon as the first liquid stool occurs. Then take one capsule with each liquid loose stool. (The maximum dose of loperamide in a day is 8 capsules). **Continued...**

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If you have an increase of more than 4 bowel movements each day compared to pre-treatment, or any diarrhoea at night, please ring The Christie Hotline on **0161 446 3658** for advice.

**If you have a stoma or notice capsules in stoma output – you should ask for tablets rather than capsules.**

- **Anaemia (low number of red blood cells)**

While having this treatment, you may become anaemic. This may make you feel tired and breathless. If these symptoms occur, please inform your doctor or nurse at your appointment. You may require a blood transfusion. Regular blood tests will be carried out during treatment to observe any changes.

- **Feeling tired (fatigue)**

Feeling fatigued is a common side effect. You may need to limit your activities to help with this. Do what you feel capable of and take plenty of rest if you need to.

- **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.

- **Headache**

Headache can occur on this medication and can be managed with painkillers and monitoring. Please contact The Christie Hotline if you experience severe episodes as there can be other causes of headaches that need to be considered.

- **Painful and stiff joints**

This treatment can be associated with joint aches and pains. It can cause arthralgia (joint pain), back pain and pain in hands and feet. You may need painkillers to help with this. For mild pain you can take paracetamol. In some cases your doctor may need to prescribe strong painkillers.

- **Muscle cramps and weakness**

Muscular weakness, spasms, fatigue, and myalgia (muscle aches and pains) have been reported in clinical trials. Please contact The Christie Hotline on **0161 446 3658** if you have severe or worsening episodes.

- **Fever**

Fever is a side effect with encorafenib. Fever is defined as a temperature of more than 37.5°C. You should have a digital thermometer available at home and check your temperature if you feel unwell. Symptoms of fever include shivering, sweats and feeling hot or flushed. If you develop a fever you should contact The Christie Hotline on **0161 446 3658** so the doctor treating you can be informed.

- **Flu like symptoms**

Mild symptoms of fevers, chills, and nausea can occur at the time of the cetuximab infusion and normally quickly resolve.

- **Constipation**

This can occur during treatment. It is important you contact your medical team for support and advice on managing this with possible medications or dietary advice. You should contact your doctor or The Christie Hotline on **0161 446 3658** if you have associated pain, fever and dark or red stools.

- **Kidney and liver changes**

On occasions, this treatment may cause changes in your kidney and liver function. It is often detected throughout routine blood tests carried out as part of your assessment and consultations with your medical team during hospital visits on treatment. If detected, this can be managed appropriately with medications or intravenous fluids.

### • **Haemorrhage (Warning!)**

Please report any episodes of unexplained bleeding. Contact The Christie Hotline on **0161 446 3658** if any of the following occur:

- blood in stools, which may also present as stools that look like tar
- vomiting blood
- vaginal bleeding that is heavier than your normal period, bleeding in between periods or post-menopausal bleeding.

### • **Low magnesium**

Magnesium is a blood salt that can become low after several weeks of treatment with cetuximab. The commonest symptoms this can cause are weakness and muscle cramps and rarely can cause confusion or heart problems. The magnesium levels in your blood will be closely monitored and supplements can be given if the level falls below normal.

High magnesium foods include dark leafy greens, nuts, seeds, fish, beans, whole grains, avocados, yogurt, bananas, dried fruit and dark chocolate.

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

### • **Vision changes and other conditions affecting the eyes (Warning!)**

Encorafenib can cause uveitis which is inflammation of part of the eye. Please contact The Christie Hotline on **0161 446 3658** immediately if you develop blurred vision, eye pain, swelling or redness. Depending on your symptoms we may have to ask you to arrange an urgent appointment at your local eye hospital.

You may experience inflammation of the eyelids; conjunctivitis; your eyelashes may grow longer; you may produce excessive tears or have red, dry or itchy eyes. If you develop any of these symptoms, please discuss with your doctor or nurse.

### • **Blood clot (venous thromboembolism) (Warning!)**

During this 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.

### • **Cardiac changes – left ventricular dysfunction (Heart failure) (Warning!)**

Heart failure is an uncommon side effect of encorafenib but can be serious and difficult to treat. We will assess your heart rate and rhythm by carrying out an electrocardiogram (ECG) before you start treatment, which will be repeated after one month and then about every 12 weeks. In some cases we will also request a test to assess your heart function by carrying out a MUGA scan or an echocardiogram. Contact The Christie Hotline on **0161 446 3658** if any of the following symptoms occur:

- rapid, irregular heart rate
- swelling of legs, ankles and feet- this is a common side-effect and can also occur due to cancer and other causes (see under peripheral oedema- ankle swelling, below)
- shortness of breath
- fatigue or changes in energy
- reduced ability to exercise
- persistent cough or wheeze
- dizziness or fainting
- chest pain

## • Allergic reactions

Occasionally allergic reactions can occur whilst you are receiving the cetuximab drip in hospital. This can result in symptoms of a rash, dizziness, wheeze, shortness of breath, and loss of consciousness. Before receiving cetuximab all patients are given treatment to reduce the risk of a reaction occurring. If you develop an allergic reaction the drip will be stopped and further treatment will be given to help the reaction settle.

Serious infusion reactions occurred in approximately 3% of patients in clinical trials, with a fatal outcome reported in less than 1 in 1,000.

## • Peripheral oedema - ankle swelling

Ankle swelling is a common side effect of treatment, and can also occur due to cancer and other causes. Occasionally, ankle swelling may be a sign of heart failure which can be severe and difficult to treat. Please contact The Christie Hotline on **0161 446 3658** if you experience ankle swelling during treatment.

## • Sore mouth

Your mouth may become sore or dry, or you may notice small mouth ulcers during this treatment. Drinking plenty of fluids and cleaning your teeth regularly and gently with a soft toothbrush can help to reduce the risk of this happening. We can prescribe a mouthwash for you to use during treatment. You can dilute this with water if your mouth is sore. Ask your doctor or nurse for further advice. There is also general mouth care information in the chemotherapy booklet. If you continue to have a sore mouth, please contact The Christie Hotline.

Occasionally during treatment you may experience a strange taste sometimes described as metallic or bitter. A strongly flavoured sweet or mint will help to disguise this.

## Rare side effect (less than 1 in 100)

### • Lung toxicity

Interstitial lung disease (ILD) is excessive, unnatural inflammation of the lungs and is a rare toxicity occurring in less than 1 in 200 patients. You may experience a troublesome, persistent cough and severe breathing difficulties which can rarely be fatal. In patients who already have interstitial pneumonitis or pulmonary fibrosis, the benefits of therapy versus the risk of lung complications will be specifically discussed with your doctor.

## Other considerations:

### If you are taking any other medications:

Encorafenib can interact with other medications. It is important to let your doctor or pharmacist know if you are on any medications for other conditions or if there are any changes to your medication.

Common types of medications which might react with encorafenib are:

- Antibiotics such as rifampicin, clarithromycin, erythromycin
- Anti-fungals such as ketoconazole, fluconazole and itraconazole
- Cardiac medications such as amiodarone, diltiazem and verapamil
- Anti-seizure medications such as carbamazepine, phenobarbitone and phenytoin
- Drugs taken after a transplant such as ciclosporin
- Hormones such as oestrogens and progesterones
- St John's Wort and other herbal medication
- Drugs to reduce stomach acid

## Diet

You do not need to be on a special diet whilst having this treatment. However, grapefruit and grapefruit juice can interact with encorafenib and should be avoided.

## Sex, contraception and fertility

We recommend that you or your partner use a condom during sexual intercourse while receiving treatment and for one month after. It is still possible to become pregnant or father a child while on this treatment. Pregnancy should be avoided as it is unknown whether this treatment is harmful to the unborn baby. Hormonal contraception may not work as well in women taking these medications. Do not breast feed during treatment with encorafenib. These medications may damage sperm and cause sterility in men. If you plan to have children please discuss this with your doctor before commencing treatment.

## 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.

The long term possible side effects of treatment with encorafenib in combination with cetuximab are not yet known. Please speak to your doctor if you wish to discuss this further.

## Contacts

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**.

Your consultant is: .....

Your hospital number is: .....

Your key worker is: .....

Notes:

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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