

## Neratinib (Nerlynx®)

Neratinib is a targeted (biological) therapy. Neratinib belongs to a category of medications called tyrosine kinase inhibitors. This group of drugs block the growth and spread of cancer. They target and interfere with processes in the cells that cause cancer to grow. Neratinib works by irreversibly binding to and inhibiting specific receptors in cancer cells called HER2 and EGFR receptors. These receptors are responsible for helping cancer cells grow and multiply. By inhibiting the HER2 and EGFR receptors with neratinib, cancer cells can no longer continue growing and multiplying.

Neratinib is only suitable for patients who have early stage breast cancer:

- which is HER2 positive, and
- which is hormone receptor positive, and
- for which previous treatment with another medicine called trastuzumab (Herceptin®) was completed less than 1 year ago.

The aim of neratinib treatment is to reduce the risk of breast cancer coming back in the years after diagnosis.

### Your treatment

You have been prescribed a treatment called neratinib.

The treatment is given every 4 weeks for one year. Each cycle consists of: Neratinib 240mg (6 x 40mg tablets) once daily for 28 days.

The tablets should be taken with food, preferably in the morning. Swallow the tablets whole with water.

You will also need to take anti-diarrhoea medicine when you start taking neratinib. You will have a routine blood test when you come into outpatients for your treatment. The tests required are as follows:

Cycle 1: Day 1 and day 8 blood tests

Cycles 2 - 6: Day 1 blood test

Cycle 7+: Blood tests may be less frequent eg: every 6 - 8 weeks

Occasionally we may not be able to go ahead with your treatment until your blood counts are back to a safe level. If this happens, your neratinib may be delayed a week, or the dose reduced.

**You must never take your capsules unless you have had your blood checked and been given the go ahead by your medical team.**

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

Tell your medical team if you are taking any other medication. This is because neratinib can affect the way some medicines work. Also some medicines can affect the way neratinib works. In particular the following: ketoconazole or fluconazole, erythromycin or clarithromycin, rifampicin, protease inhibitors (anti-viral medication), carbamazepine, phenobarbital or phenytoin, St John's Wort, diltiazem or verapamil, digoxin, lansoprazole, omeprazole, ranitidine, cimetidine or similar medicines that reduce stomach acid. Grapefruit juice should be avoided when you are taking Neratinib.

## Possible side effects

This treatment 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 medical team about any side effects so they can be monitored and where possible, treated.

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

### • Diarrhoea

Diarrhoea is a very common side effect of neratinib and anti-diarrhoeal medicines should be taken to relieve this symptom. Diarrhoea usually happens early in treatment with neratinib, during the first month and may be recurrent. Although uncomfortable, mild diarrhoea does not usually cause serious problems. However, diarrhoea may be severe, causing you to get dehydrated. You should take your anti-diarrhoeal medicines regularly as prescribed, starting with the very first dose of neratinib. Try to remain well hydrated (8 - 10 glasses of clear fluids each day). Diarrhoea can be serious and lead to hospitalisation. If you continue to have more than 4 extra bowel movements a day (compared to pre-treatment) despite taking the anti-diarrhoea medication, contact The Christie Hotline on **0161 446 3658**.

If you become constipated as a result of the anti-diarrhoeal medication contact The Christie Hotline as they will be able to advise how to adapt the anti-diarrhoeal medication.

### • Nausea and vomiting (sickness)

The severity of this varies from person to person. Anti-sickness medication may be given along with your treatment to prevent this. You can also be given anti-sickness tablets to take at home. If you continue to feel or be sick, contact your GP or this hospital because your anti-sickness medication may need to be changed or increased.

### • Stomach pain

### • Fatigue

Some treatment may make you feel tired and lacking in energy. It can be frustrating when you feel unable to cope with routine tasks. You may benefit from additional support during your treatment. Complementary therapies may be helpful. Speak to your medical team for further information. If necessary, take time off work. Gentle exercise, such as walking, can help.

### • Poor appetite

If you lose your appetite, please be sure to tell your doctor or nurse at your next hospital visit. Ask staff for a copy of the booklet 'Eating - help yourself'.

### • Skin rash

You may develop a skin rash, dry skin or itching. This is usually mild and easily treated. Please tell your medical team at your next visit.

### • Muscle spasms or cramps

## • Mouth pain or mouth ulcers

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 medical team for further advice. There is also, general mouth care information in The Christie chemotherapy booklet. If you continue to have a sore mouth, contact The Christie Hotline.

## Uncommon side effects

### • Liver problems

This treatment can occasionally cause abnormal liver blood tests (rises in bilirubin). This is rarely very severe, but your liver function will be monitored just after you have started treatment and every time you come to clinic.

Not all side effects are listed above. Some rare side effects (occurring in less than 10% of patients) are not listed here. However, you should always inform your medical team if you experience any unusual symptoms.

## Late effects

Long-term possible side effects of treatment with neratinib are not yet completely known. Your medical team can discuss any concerns you may have.

## Sex, contraception and fertility

### Women who can become pregnant

We recommend you use an effective form of contraception throughout neratinib treatment and up to a month after your last dose. If you suspect that you may be pregnant please contact the hospital immediately.

### Men

We recommend you use a form of barrier contraception, such as a condom, throughout neratinib treatment and up to 3 months after your last dose.

## 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: .....

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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 **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