

PHARMACY

Drug Information

Afatinib (Giotrif®) Tablet



What is Afatinib?

- Afatinib is used for the treatment of Epidermal Growth Factor Receptor (EGFR) positive non-small cell lung cancer.

How is Afatinib Taken?

- Afatinib is taken orally once daily on an empty stomach (one hour before food or three hours after food), at the same time each day.
- Swallow them whole with a glass of water. Do not chew or crush the medications. Inform your doctor or pharmacist if you have difficulty swallowing. They may suggest to disperse the tablet in approximately 100ml of non-carbonated drinking water. You should not use other liquids to disperse the tablet. The tablet should be dropped into the water without crushing it, and stirred occasionally for up to 15 minutes until it is broken down into very small particles. The mixture should be consumed immediately. You need to rinse the glass with approximately 100ml of water and drink the water after rinsing. The dispersion can also be administered through a feeding tube. The glass and spoon used should be washed and kept separate from other crockery and cooking utensils.
- If possible, handle the medication yourself. If a family member or caregiver needs to give the medication, wash hands before and after handling the medication.
- If you vomit after taking Afatinib, do not take a second dose. Inform your doctor immediately for advice. If you miss a dose of Afatinib, you can take it as soon as you remember. If the next scheduled dose is due within 8 hours, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times. Do not double the dose to make up for the missed dose.

Can Afatinib be Taken With Other Medications?

- You should not take Afatinib concurrently with certain medications. Please inform your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking other medications, including Traditional Chinese Medicines, Jamu medicine or supplements.

What are the Important Side Effects of Afatinib?

- Medications prescribed by your doctor should be beneficial for your condition even though they may result in some inevitable side effects.

Side Effect	Management
Acne-like rashes may appear on the body areas exposed to the sun after starting treatment and go away completely when the treatment stops. Skin on the face may also become flaky and scaly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid direct sunlight and applying sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of at least 30 may help. Alternatively, wear a hat, long sleeves, and long pants outside on sunny days. • Applying moisturizers to dry areas may also help.
Diarrhoea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your doctor can prescribe medications to control diarrhoea. Take it at the first sign of diarrhea and continue till diarrhoea has stopped for 12 hours. • Make sure you drink at least two litres (8 cups) of fluids every day when you have diarrhoea. • Avoid milk or dairy products and/or high fibre food whilst you are having diarrhea. • Please proceed to the A & E department immediately if diarrhoea is up to 4 to 6 times a day and is not controlled despite medication use.
Mouth ulcers can occur on the tongue, the sides of the mouth or in the throat and this can lead to an infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brush your teeth gently after eating and at bedtime with a soft toothbrush. • Rinse and brush your dentures after eating and soak them in denture solution overnight. • Rinsing your mouth regularly with an alcohol-free mouth gargle or salt water may help reduce chances of infection.

Side Effect	Management
Nose bleed may occur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit up straight and tip your head slightly forward. Tilting your head back may cause blood to run down your throat. • Pinch your nostrils shut between your thumb and forefinger or apply firm pressure against the bleeding nostril for 10 full minutes. After 10 minutes, check to see if your nose is still bleeding. If it is, hold it for 10 more minutes. • Do not blow your nose for at least 12 hours after the bleeding has stopped. • Please proceed to the A & E department immediately if a nosebleed lasts longer than 20 minutes.
Nail changes, including loosening or loss of the nail, and swelling commonly occur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid injuring your nails or fingertips and avoid harsh soaps, detergents and nail products. • Please inform your doctor if nail changes interfere with your activities or pain is intolerable.
Changes in the way the liver works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please proceed to the A & E department immediately if you experience any yellowing of eye white, skin or tea-coloured urine or severe abdominal pain.
Changes in eyesight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please inform your doctor if you experience eye pain, swelling, redness, blurred vision, or other changes.

If you develop rashes, facial swelling or shortness of breath after taking the medication, you could be allergic to the medication. Please seek medical attention immediately.

Are There any Special Precautions That I Need to Take?

- It is important to inform your doctor if you intend to conceive or breastfeed while taking this medication.
- You must not become pregnant during treatment with Afatinib and must use an effective method of contraception. You should take appropriate contraceptive measures during and up to 1 month after cessation of treatment. If pregnancy occurs during your treatment, you must inform your doctor immediately.
- Afatinib may have an anti-fertility effect, which could be irreversible. You should discuss with your doctor regarding fertility preservation prior to starting treatment.
- You should not breast-feed during treatment.

What Else can I do to Help my Condition?

- Exercise
Light exercise is recommended as it helps to improve mobility, balance and even emotional well-being. Do avoid strenuous exercise, and rest when you are feeling tired.
- Stay positive
Understand your condition and take an active role in managing it. Do not be afraid to talk about it with your doctor/ pharmacist/ family members. Repressed feelings can be harmful to your immediate well-being and long-term health.
- Adequate hydration
Maintain adequate hydration with 2 to 3 litres (8 to 12 cups) of fluids per day unless informed by your doctor to restrict fluids. This will decrease your chances of being constipated and also prevent dehydration.
- Medical and dental treatment
If you need to go into hospital for any reason other than cancer, always inform the doctors and nurses that you are having chemotherapy.
Talk to your cancer doctor if you think you need dental treatment.
Always inform your dentist that you are having chemotherapy

How do I Store Afatinib?

- Store your medication in a cool, dry place away from heat, moisture and direct sunlight.

If you have any problem with your treatment, please contact your doctor, pharmacist or nurse clinician.

Please keep all medications out of reach of children.

You can also find useful information with regards to your medication on this website:

<https://www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support>



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