

PHARMACY

Drug Information

Erlotinib Tablet



What is Erlotinib?

- Erlotinib is used to treat non-small cell lung and pancreatic cancer.

How is Erlotinib Administered/Taken?

- Erlotinib is usually taken orally once daily on an empty stomach (at least one hour before or two hours after food) at the same time each day.
- The tablet should be swallowed whole. Do not chew or crush the tablet. Inform your doctor or pharmacist if you have difficulty swallowing.
- If possible, handle the medication yourself. Otherwise, your family member or caregiver can help to handle the medication. Wash hands before and after handling the medication.
- If you miss a dose of Erlotinib, take it as soon as you can if it is within 12 hours of the missed dose. If it is more than 12 hours of the missed dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing time.
- If you vomit the dose of Erlotinib, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times.

Can Erlotinib be Taken With Other Medications?

- Please inform your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking other medications, including Traditional Chinese Medicines, Jamu medicine or supplements.
- Avoid grapefruit. It may increase amount of Erlotinib in your blood to a harmful level.
- Antacids should be separated from Erlotinib by at least two hours. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any other drugs to reduce stomach acid such as Omeprazole or Ranitidine.

What are the Important Side Effects of Erlotinib?

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

Side Effect	Management
Nausea or vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take small, frequent meals. • Avoid smells that can cause nausea. • Take medicines for nausea or vomiting prescribed by your doctor. • Avoid tight-fitting clothes around the waist.
Diarrhoea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform your doctor if this is severe and/or does not improve with medicine use. • Drink at least 2 litres (8 cups) of fluids every day when you are having diarrhoea. • Avoid milk, dairy products, high fibre food or spicy food while you are having diarrhoea.
Acne-like rashes may appear on the face, upper chest and back usually within three weeks 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 apply sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of at least 30. Alternatively, wear a hat, long sleeves, and long pants outside on sunny days. • Apply moisturizers to dry areas.
Nail changes, inflammation of the skin surrounding a fingernail or toenail may occur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mild pain can be relieved by taking Paracetamol (Panadol ®). Inform your doctor if pain is not controlled by Paracetamol (Panadol ®). • If you experience pain, redness or swelling around your nails, inform your doctor.

Side Effect	Management
Hair changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These are less common, but sometimes develop after three months or more. Your eyelashes may grow longer and curlier. You may notice that your head and body hair is finer, curlier or more brittle. This usually develops gradually. All of these changes are usually temporary and will improve once treatment stops.
Fatigue or Tiredness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not drive or operate machinery if you are feeling tired. Inform your doctor if fatigue is persistent or worsens.
Changes in eyesight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please inform your doctor if you experience eye pain, swelling, redness, blurred vision, and/or sensitivity to light or other changes.
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 eyes and skin, tea-coloured urine, pale stools or severe abdominal pain.
Lung problems (Pneumonitis, inflammation of the lung)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please proceed to the A&E department immediately if you experience difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, chest pain and/or new or worsening cough.

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?

- You must not become pregnant during treatment with Erlotinib and must use an effective method of contraception. You should take appropriate contraceptive measures during and up to one month after stopping treatment. If pregnancy occurs during your treatment, you must inform your doctor immediately.
- Erlotinib 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 breastfeed 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 receiving anti-cancer treatment. Talk to your cancer doctor if you think you need dental treatment. Always inform your dentist that you are receiving anti-cancer treatment.

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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