

PHARMACY

Drug Information

Sunitinib Capsule



What is Sunitinib?

- Sunitinib is usually used for the treatment of kidney cancers, gastrointestinal stromal and pancreatic neuroendocrine tumours.

How is Sunitinib Administered / Taken?

- Sunitinib is taken once daily, with or without food.
- Swallow them whole with a glass of water, do not chew or crush the medicines. Inform your doctor or pharmacist if you have difficulty swallowing.
- 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 Sunitinib, do not take a second dose. Inform your doctor immediately for advice. If you miss a dose of Sunitinib, do not take a double dose. Skip the missed dose and go back to the usual dosing time.

Can Sunitinib be Administered / Taken With Other Medications?

- You should avoid taking grapefruit or grapefruit juice during the duration while taking Sunitinib capsules as these may interact with Sunitinib.
- Please inform your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking other medications, including supplements, traditional or herbal remedies.

What are the Important Side Effects of Sunitinib?

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

Side Effect	Management
Risk of infection can occur as Sunitinib can reduce the number of white blood cells in your blood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prevent infection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Wash your hands after using the toilet. -Avoid crowds and people who are sick. -Do not share food and avoid taking raw food. Please proceed to the A & E department immediately if you experience signs of an infection such as fever with a temperature above 38°C, chills, and burning sensation when passing urine. Do not take Paracetamol (Panadol®) to relieve fever unless instructed by your doctor/ nurse.
Bruising or bleeding can occur as Sunitinib can reduce the number of platelets in your blood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prevent bleeding problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Try not to bruise, cut or burn yourself. -Clean your nose by blowing gently. Do not pick your nose. -Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush as your gums may bleed more easily. Be aware that bleeding may take a longer time to stop. Please proceed to the A & E department immediately if you experience signs of bleeding such as blood in urine or stools, or easy bruising.

Side Effect	Management
Nausea or Vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small frequent meals or sucking hard, sugar-free candy may help. Please remember to take the medicines for nausea or vomiting as instructed by your doctor.
Diarrhoea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your doctor can prescribe medicines to control diarrhoea. Inform your doctor if it is severe or if it does not improve with medication. Make sure you drink at least two litres (8 cups) of fluids every day when you have diarrhea. Avoid milk or dairy products and/or high fibre food whilst you are having diarrhoea.
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.
Skin or urine may sometimes become yellowish in colour. Hair may sometimes lose its natural colour and become grey or white	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This will return to normal once you stop treatment with Sunitinib.

Side Effect	Management
Hand-foot syndrome where palms of hands and soles of your feet may tingle, become red, numb, painful, or swollen. Skin may also become dry or itchy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform your doctor if blisters, severe pain or ulcers affects your normal daily activities. • Avoid tight-fitting shoes or rubbing pressure to hands and feet if this occurs. • Applying moisturizer to hands and feet liberally often may help. • Applying sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of at least 30 may help.
Skin reactions such as rashes, redness and dryness	<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 help.
Slow wound healing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wounds may take longer to heal while you are being treated with Sunitinib. If you have any surgery planned you should stop taking Sunitinib before the operation and not start taking it again until the wound is fully healed, as instructed by your doctor.
Changes in the way the heart works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please proceed to the A & E department immediately if you experience sudden swelling of hands or feet, shortness of breath and/or chest pain.

Side Effect	Management
Increase in blood pressure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blood pressure will be monitored regularly each time you come to the clinic. If you have blood pressure monitoring machine at home, you can measure your own blood pressure every day and record it in a book. • Please remember to take the medicines for high blood pressure if you have high blood pressure.
Increased chances of bleeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please proceed to the A & E department immediately if you cough up blood, have any unusual bruising, persistent nosebleeds or bleeding gums, unexpected vaginal bleeding, your vomit is bloody or looks like coffee grounds and/or you have black, tarry stools.
Signs of a stroke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please proceed to the A & E department immediately if you experience sudden onset of severe headache, eyesight changes, slurred speech, loss of coordination, weakness or numbness in arm or leg.
Signs of a blood clot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please proceed to the A & E department immediately if you experience tenderness or hardness over a vein, calf swelling and tenderness, sudden onset of cough, chest pain, or shortness of breath.

Side Effect	Management
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.
Thyroid function may be less effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Symptoms of an underactive thyroid include tiredness, weight gain, constipation, aches, feeling cold, dry skin and dry hair. Inform your doctor should you have any new symptoms as you may need a blood test to check your thyroid levels.

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 Sunitinib and must use an effective method of contraception. You should take appropriate contraceptive measures during and up to 6 months after cessation of treatment. If pregnancy occurs during your treatment, you must inform your doctor immediately.
- Sunitinib 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. 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 getting constipation 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 Sunitinib?

- 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.

