

Pharmacy

DRUG INFORMATION

Thalidomide Capsule



What is Thalidomide?

- Thalidomide is an anti-cancer drug used to treat multiple myeloma.

How Is Thalidomide Administered / Taken?

- Thalidomide is usually taken orally one hour before or 2 hours after food.
- The capsule should be swallowed whole. Do not chew or crush the capsules. Inform your doctor or pharmacist if you have difficulty swallowing.
- If possible, handle the medication yourself. If you need a family member or caregiver to give the medication, ensure that they wash their hands before and after handling the medication.
- If you miss a dose of Thalidomide, take it as soon as possible if it is within 12 hours of the missed dose. If it is more than 12 hours since your missed dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times.

Can Thalidomide Be Administered / Taken With Other Medications?

- Please inform your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking other medications, including Traditional Chinese Medicines, Jamu medicines or supplements.

What Are The Important Side Effects Of Thalidomide?

- 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 Thalidomide can reduce the number of white blood cells in your blood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reduce risk of infection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wash your hands after toileting. - Avoid crowds and people who are sick. - Avoid raw food. • Please proceed to the A&E department immediately if you experience signs of infection such as fever with a temperature of 38°C and above, chills and shivering. Avoid taking Paracetamol (Panadol®) to relieve fever. Be aware that taking

Side Effect	Management
	Paracetamol may mask fever and hence delay treatment of infection.
Bruising or bleeding can occur as Thalidomide can reduce the number of platelets in your blood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reduce risk of bleeding problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not pick your nose. - Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush. - Be aware that bleeding may take a longer time to stop. Please proceed to the A&E department immediately if you experience any severe bleeding (eg, passing a large amount of fresh blood in urine or stools, or passing black sticky stools) or significant bruising.
Numbness and tingling sensation in the hands or feet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform your doctor if you have this symptom or trouble buttoning up shirts or if you are unable to pick up objects.
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.
Signs of 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.
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 an arm or leg.

Side Effect	Management
Signs of a heart attack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please proceed to the A&E department immediately if you experience chest pain spreading to arms, neck, jaw or back or if you are feeling sweaty and breathless.

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.
- Women of child-bearing potential would require pregnancy tests before treatment, every four weeks during treatment and four weeks after stopping treatment. Women must not become pregnant during treatment with Thalidomide and must use an effective method of contraception. Men must use a condom each time they have sexual intercourse. Appropriate contraceptive methods should be taken during and up to four weeks after cessation of treatment. If pregnancy occurs during your treatment, you must inform your doctor immediately.
- Thalidomide 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 Thalidomide?

- 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>

