

PHARMACY

Drug Information

Venetoclax (Venclexta) Tablet



What is Venetoclax?

- Venetoclax is an anti-cancer drug used to treat leukemia or other blood disorders.

How is Venetoclax Administered / Taken?

- Venetoclax is taken orally with food approximately the same time each day.
- The tablet should be swallowed whole; do not chew or crush the tablets. 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 Venetoclax, take it as soon as possible if it is less than 8 hours of the missed dose. If it is more than 8 hours since your missed dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times.

Can Venetoclax 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.
- Avoid grapefruit, starfruit and Seville oranges. They may increase the amount of Venetoclax in your blood to a harmful level.

What are the Important Side Effects of Venetoclax?

- 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 Venetoclax 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 Paracetamol may mask fever and hence delay treatment of infection.
Bruising or bleeding may occur as Venetoclax 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 (e.g. passing a large amount of fresh blood in urine or stools, or passing black sticky stools) or significant bruising.
Tumor lysis syndrome may occur as Venetoclax may cause fast breakdown of the cancer cells.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep well hydrated by drinking 6 to 8 glasses of water each day and/or via intravenous hydration during treatment initiation and dose increment. Your doctor may also give you a medication to help prevent tumor lysis syndrome. Please proceed to the A&E department immediately if you experience shortness of breath, irregular heartbeat, severe abdominal pain/nausea/vomiting, change in color of urine or reduced urination, restlessness, confusion muscle cramps or seizures

Side Effect	Management
Nausea or vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take small, frequent meals. Avoid smells that precipitate nausea. Take medicines for nausea or vomiting prescribed by your doctor. Avoid tight-fitting clothes around the waist.
Constipation	Maintain adequate hydration (at least 2 litres) of fluids per day unless informed otherwise by your doctor. Your doctor may prescribe you stool softeners to prevent constipation.
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 two litres (8 cups) of fluids every day when you are having diarrhoea. Avoid milk, dairy products, high fibre food or spicy food whilst you are having diarrhoea.
Muscle aches and joint pain	<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®). Avoid Paracetamol (Panadol®) when you are having fever. Taking regular warm baths may also help.
Headaches	<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®). Avoid Paracetamol (Panadol®) when you are having fever.
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.

Side Effect	Management
Swelling of ankles and legs as a result of fluid build-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elevating legs on foot stool, cushion or pillow may help to reduce the swelling.

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 Venetoclax and must use an effective method of contraception. You should take appropriate contraceptive measures during and up to 30 days after stopping treatment. If pregnancy occurs during your treatment, you must inform your doctor immediately.
- Venetoclax may have an anti-fertility effect. 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 Venetoclax?

- 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>

