

PHARMACY

Drug Information

Imatinib (Glivec[®]) Tablet



What is Imatinib?

- Imatinib is used for the treatment of Philadelphia chromosome positive (Ph+) chronic myeloid leukemia (CML), adults with Ph+ acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL), blood disorders or certain solid tumors.

How is Imatinib Administered / Taken?

- Imatinib is taken orally once daily with food.
- 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.
- Swallow them whole with a large glass of water, do not chew or crush the medications. Inform your doctor or pharmacist if you have difficulty swallowing. They may suggest that you disperse the Imatinib tablets in water. In this case, dissolve tablets in a glass of drinking water (50ml for every 100mg tablet), stir with a spoon until the tablets are completely dissolved and then drink it immediately. It may take 15 minutes for it to disperse completely. The glass and spoon should be washed and kept separate from your other crockery and cooking utensils.
- If you miss a dose of Imatinib, 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.
- If you vomit the dose of Imatinib, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times.

Can Imatinib be Administered / Taken With Other Medications?

- You should not drink grapefruit/pomelo juice or eat grapefruit/pomelo during your treatment with Imatinib.
- 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 Imatinib?

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

Side Effect	Management
Diarrhoea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your doctor may prescribe medicines to control diarrhoea. Inform your doctor if it is severe and/or does not improve with medicine use. • Make sure you drink at least 2 litres (8 cups) of fluids every day when you are having diarrhoea. • Avoid milk or dairy products and/or high fibre food while you are having diarrhoea.
Skin reactions such as rashes, dryness, or itchiness may be common	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid direct sunlight and applying sunscreen of at least SPF (sun protection factor) 30 may help. Alternatively, wear a hat, long sleeves, and long pants outside on sunny days. • Applying moisturisers to dry areas may help. • Inform your doctor if skin reactions persist or get worse.
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 and skin or tea-coloured urine, pale stools or severe abdominal pain.
Fluid retention causing rapid weight gain, swelling of legs and ankles, difficulty breathing, puffy eyes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform your doctor if you experience such symptoms.

Side Effect	Management
Risk of infection may be increased as Imatinib 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 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 may occur as Imatinib 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"> -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.

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 Imatinib 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.
- Imatinib 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 Imatinib?

- 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>

