

## PHARMACY

### Drug Information

# Sunitinib Capsule



### What Is Sunitinib?

- Sunitinib is used to treat kidney cancers.

### How Is Sunitinib Administered / Taken?

- Sunitinib is usually taken orally once a day with or without 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 possible, handle the medication yourself. Otherwise family member or caregiver can help to handle the medications. Wash hands before and after handling the medication.
- If you miss or vomit a dose of Sunitinib skip the missed dose and take it at the next scheduled timing.

### Can Sunitinib 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 grapefruits. They may increase amount of Sunitinib in your blood to a harmful level.

### 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
Bruising or bleeding can occur as Sunitinib can reduce the number of platelets in your blood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To reduce risk of bleeding problems:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do not pick your nose.</li> <li>- Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush.</li> <li>- Be aware that bleeding may take a longer time to stop.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Please proceed to the A&amp;E department immediately if you experience any severe</li> </ul>

Side Effect	Management
	or persistent bleeding (e.g. passing a large amount of fresh blood in urine or stools, or passing black sticky stools) or significant bruising.
Nausea or vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take small, frequent meals.</li> <li>• Avoid smells that precipitate nausea.</li> <li>• Take medicines for nausea or vomiting prescribed by your doctor.</li> <li>• Avoid tight-fitting clothes around the waist.</li> </ul>
Diarrhoea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform your doctor if this is severe and/or does not improve with medicine use.</li> <li>• Drink at least two litres (eight cups) of fluids every day when you are having diarrhoea.</li> <li>• Avoid milk, dairy products, high fibre food or spicy food while you are having diarrhoea.</li> </ul>
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"> <li>• Brush your teeth gently after eating and at bedtime with a soft toothbrush.</li> <li>• Rinse and brush your dentures after eating and soak them in denture solution overnight.</li> <li>• Rinsing your mouth regularly with an alcohol-free mouth gargle or salt water may help reduce chances of infection.</li> </ul>
Skin rashes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform your doctor if the rash is very irritating. For mild rash, inform your doctor on the next visit as it generally resolves before the next treatment.</li> </ul>

Side Effect	Management
Signs of blood clot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please proceed to the A&amp;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.</li> </ul>
Signs of a stroke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please proceed to the A&amp;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.</li> </ul>
Slow wound healing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wounds may take longer to heal while you are being treated with Sunitinib.</li> <li>• If you have any surgery planned, let your doctors know. They will instruct you on the duration to stop Sunitinib before surgery and when to resume after surgery.</li> </ul>
Increased chances of bleeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please proceed to the A&amp;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.</li> </ul>
Increased in blood pressure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blood pressure will be monitored regularly when you come to the clinic. If you have a blood pressure monitoring machine at home, you can measure your blood pressure every day and record it in a book.</li> <li>• Please remember to take your prescribed medicines for high blood pressure.</li> </ul>

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"> <li>To reduce risk of infection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wash your hands after toileting.</li> <li>- Avoid crowds and people who are sick.</li> <li>- Avoid raw food.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Please proceed to the A&amp;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.</li> </ul>
Heart problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please proceed to the A&amp;E department immediately if you experience signs of heart problems such as shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chest pain, fast heart beat or sudden swelling of legs.</li> </ul>
Effects on thyroid glands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sunitinib can sometimes affect the thyroid gland, making it less or more active.</li> <li>Your doctor will check how your thyroid is working with regular blood tests. If this happens, it can be treated with medications.</li> </ul>
Lung problems (Pneumonitis, inflammation of the lung)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please proceed to the A&amp;E department immediately if you experience difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, chest pain and/or new or worsening cough.</li> </ul>
Changes in the way the liver works (Hepatitis, inflammation of the liver)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please proceed to the A&amp;E department immediately if you experience any yellowing of eye white and skin or tea-coloured urine, pale stools or severe abdominal pain.</li> </ul>

Side Effect	Management
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"> <li>This will return to normal once you stop treatment with Sunitinib.</li> </ul>

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 Sunitinib and must use an effective method of contraception. You should take appropriate contraceptive measures during and up to seven weeks after stopping 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 two to three 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 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.

### **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.

**You can also find useful information with regards to your medication on this website:**

<https://www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support>

