



Oral Chemotherapy: Cabozantinib (Cometriq®)

Pronounced: "ka-boe-ZAN-ti-nib"

How drug is given: By mouth

Purpose: This drug stops the growth of cancer cells in thyroid cancer.

How to take this drug

- Take this medication on an empty stomach (at least 1 hour before or 2 hours after food).
- Swallow each capsule whole. Do not open or chew them. If you have trouble swallowing the capsule, the pharmacist will give you specific instructions.
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as possible. However, if it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular dosing schedule. Do not double dose.
- Cabozantinib can interfere with many drugs, which may change how this works in your body. Talk with your doctor before starting any new drugs, including over-the-counter drugs, natural products, herbal supplements, and vitamins.
- Do not drink grapefruit juice or eat grapefruit while taking this drug. Also, do not take St. John's wort. These products may increase the amount of medication in your body and worsen side effects.

Storage and disposal

- Store at room temperature, away from heat and moisture.
- Keep this medicine in its original container, out of reach of children and pets.
- If you have unused oral chemotherapy capsules, please return them to the pharmacy where the prescription was filled. Do not flush them down the toilet, dump in the sink, or throw away in the trash.

Things that may occur during or treatment

- Your blood pressure may go up. If this happens, you may be given medication to help with this. If you have headaches or dizziness, tell your cancer care team right away.
- Taste changes may occur; Foods may taste different.
- You may experience mild to moderate nausea, vomiting and loss of appetite. You may be given medication to help with this.
- You may have changes in your voice. Your voice may weaken or become hoarse.
- Loose stools or diarrhea may occur within a few days after the drug is started. You may take loperamide (Imodium A-D®) to help control diarrhea. You can buy this at most drug stores. Be sure to also drink more fluids (water, juice, sports drinks). If these do not help within 24 hours, **call your cancer care team.**

- Some of your hair may fall out or change in color with treatment.
- The palms of your hands or the soles of your feet may become red and painful. This is called hand-foot syndrome. Avoid tight fitting shoes. Use thick (moisturizing) creams on hands and feet.
- Mild constipation may occur after treatment begins. Be sure to drink more fluids and get more fiber in your diet by eating fresh fruits and vegetables. A daily stool softener, such as docusate (Colace®), and/or laxatives, such as senna (Senakot®), may be helpful. If these do not help within 48 hours, tell your cancer care team. Do not use bulk-forming laxatives such as Metamucil® without first talking with your cancer care team.
- This drug may cause a change in your blood sugar and/or triglyceride levels.
- You may get mouth pain. You may have a burning feeling and redness inside the mouth or on the lips. Mouth rinses may be ordered by your doctor. Check with your cancer care team before having any dental work done.
- Your blood cell counts may drop. This is known as bone marrow suppression. This includes a decrease in:
 - Red blood cells, which carry oxygen in your body to help give you energy
 - White blood cells, which fight infection in your body
 - Platelets, which help clot the blood to stop bleeding

If you have a **fever of 100.5°F (38°C) or higher**, chills, a cough, or any bleeding problems, **call your cancer care team right away**.

- Your liver may be affected by this medicine. On occasion, blood work will be taken to monitor your liver function.
- Your kidneys could be hurt by this drug and not work as well. Blood work will be taken to monitor your kidney function.
- Skin changes, such as dryness or a rash on your body, may occur. Ask your cancer team what lotions or creams you may use.
- Some important minerals called electrolytes are found in your body and body fluids. They can be affected by this medicine. Your cancer team will check your blood work periodically to monitor your potassium, magnesium, and sodium levels.
- In rare cases, a special problem with nerves called *reversible posterior leukoencephalopathy syndrome* (RPLS) may occur. Patients may have a headache, feel sleepy or confused, have a change in eyesight, and have seizures or other problems. This can happen 16 hours to one year after starting Cabozantinib. Early treatment can help, but delayed treatment can result in more permanent damage. Call your cancer care team if you have any of the symptoms noted above.
- In rare cases, a leak or a rupture may occur in the intestines of your stomach.
 - Call your cancer care team if you have major changes in bowel habits, especially diarrhea or dehydration.
 - A bowel rupture can be an emergency and require urgent medical treatment. If

you feel severe abdominal pain, chills, fever, nausea, or vomiting, or notice blood in your stool **seek immediate medical care.**

Things that may occur after treatment ends (even months to years later)

Fertility and related precautions

It is not safe to take this medicine during pregnancy. It could harm an unborn baby.

Women

- To keep from getting pregnant, use a barrier form of effective birth control and keep using it for at least 4 months after you stop treatment.
- Barrier methods of birth control prevent the sperm from reaching the egg. Discuss with your cancer team which type of barrier method is best for you. Some barrier methods are cervical caps, female/male condoms, and diaphragms with spermicides. Some are available over-the-counter; others must be prescribed.
- Women should not breastfeed while receiving this medicine.

Men

- It is very important to use birth control while taking this drug and for 4 months after stopping the drug, if you are having sex with a woman of child-bearing age, because this drug may be harmful to an unborn baby.
- If you are concerned about any of this, please talk with your health care team.

The information in this document includes some, but not necessarily all, of the possible side effects of this medication. The side effects listed here may not be the same ones you experience. Your side effects may be different, depending on how often you receive treatment (your schedule) and how much you receive each time (your dosage). Side effects may also vary if you are taking other medications. Please speak with your cancer care team if you have questions about possible side effects you may experience. This document should not take the place of conversations with members of your cancer care team.

If you experience any significant change in your health during or after treatment, contact a member of your cancer care team right away.



Oral chemotherapy medicines are given by mouth in the form of capsules, tablets, or liquid. These safety tips will help you understand what to do when you are taking oral chemotherapy. **Please note:** If you are on a clinical trial, you may be given special instructions.

How to take this drug

- Swallow each tablet or capsule whole. Do not break, crush, or chew.
- Prepare your drug away from food and food prep areas.
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as possible. However, if it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular dosing schedule.
- Do not double the dose.
- If you are on a clinical trial, you will be given special instructions if you miss a dose.
- If you are unable to swallow the pill, speak with your nurse or pharmacist about other ways to take your medication.
- If you vomit or throw up your medication, call your physician for further instructions.
- Wash your hands after taking the medication. Avoid handling crushed or broken pills (tablets or capsules).

Storage

- Most oral chemotherapy medicine is stored at room temperature, away from excess heat and moisture. You will be told if the medication you are taking needs special storage or handling.
- Keep this medicine in its original container, in a safe place, away from other family medications. All medications need to be kept out of the reach of children and pets.

Disposal

- If you have unused oral chemotherapy pills (tablets or capsules), please return them to the pharmacy where the prescription was filled. Do not flush down the toilet, dump in the sink, or throw away in the trash.

Safe handling of body waste in the home after chemotherapy

- Chemotherapy stays in the body for hours or even days, and is found in vomit, urine, stool, and sweat (body wastes). Special care must be taken to prevent the patient's body waste from coming into accidental contact with the patient or caregiver.

Body wastes

Patient and caregiver:

- You can use the toilet (septic tank or city sewage) as usual. There is no research to support double flushing to prevent accidental contact (although this may be suggested for certain medications). Ask your doctor or nurse what they suggest for

your medication.

- Wash your hands well with soap and water after using the toilet. If urine, vomit, or stool gets on your body, wash with soap and water. Always wear gloves when cleaning equipment or disposing waste from a urinal or commode.
- Pregnant caregivers should not handle patient body waste.
- It is safe for family and friends to use the same toilet, as long as all body waste is cleaned from the toilet.
- To absorb urine or stool, use a disposable, plastic-backed pad, diaper, or sheet. Change it immediately when soiled. Then wash skin with soap and water.
- If you have an ostomy, you or your caregiver may want to wear gloves when emptying or changing appliances.

Laundry

- Always wear disposable gloves when handling sheets or clothes that have been soiled with body waste.
- Soiled items should be kept and washed separately from the other laundry.

Oral chemotherapy is a serious drug that requires extra caution. If you have questions or concerns about your oral chemotherapy, do not hesitate to call your clinician. For more tips, tools and short videos to help you manage oral chemotherapy visit our web page at <http://www.dana-farber.org/oralchemo>