



Venetoclax (Venclexta®)

("ven-ET-oh-klax")

How drug is given: By mouth

Purpose: to treat chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL)

How to take this drug

1. Take this medication with a meal and water, at the same time each day.
2. Try to drink 6 to 8 glasses (about 56 ounces total) of water each day. Start 2 days before the first dose. Continue to do so on the day of the first dose and each time the dose is increased.
3. Swallow each tablet whole. Do not crush or chew.
4. Venetoclax can interfere with many drugs, which may change how this works in your body. Talk with your doctor before starting any new drugs or supplements, including over-the-counter medicines, natural products, herbal supplements, and vitamins.
5. **Avoid these fruits and juices while taking venetoclax.** They increase the amount of medication in your blood.
 - grapefruit juice
 - grapefruit
 - seville oranges (used in marmalades)
 - carambola, also known as star fruit
6. If you miss a dose, take it within 8 hours of missing the dose. However, if more than 8 hours have passed, or it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular dosing schedule. Do not double dose. If vomiting occurs after a dose, do not take another dose that day; resume dosing the next day at the usual time.
7. Wash your hands after taking the medication. Avoid handling crushed or broken tablets.

Storage

1. Store this drug at room temperature, away from heat and moisture.
2. Keep this medicine in its original container during the first 4 weeks of treatment. Keep out of reach of children and pets.



3. If you have unused oral chemotherapy pills (tablets or 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 treatment

1. 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.
2. Some patients may have mild nausea. You may be given medicine to help with this.
3. 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.

4. Some patients may develop an infection of the nose, throat, and airway. If you develop symptoms such as a productive cough with mucous, or a fever of 100.5°F (38°C) or higher, call your cancer care team right away.
5. Some patients may feel very tired, also known as fatigue. You may need to rest or take naps more often. Mild to moderate exercise can also help you maintain your energy.
6. This medicine can affect important minerals called electrolytes found in your blood and body fluids. Your cancer care team will test your blood periodically to monitor your potassium and phosphate levels.
7. Your kidneys could be hurt and not work as well. It is very **important** that you try to drink 6 to 8 glasses (about 56 ounces total) of water each day, starting 2 days before the first dose, on the day of the first dose, and each time the dose is increased. Your kidneys will be monitored closely with blood and urine tests.

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

Fertility and Related Precautions:

- It is very important to use birth control if you are having sex, because this drug may be harmful to an unborn baby.
- Females who are able to become pregnant should use effective birth control during treatment and for 30 days after the last dose of venetoclax.
- Women should not breastfeed while receiving this drug.



- If you are concerned about any of this, please talk with your cancer care team.

The above information includes some, but not necessarily all, of the possible side effects of this medication. The side effects listed in this teaching sheet 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.

Managing your oral chemotherapy schedule at home can be challenging. To help you with this, consider using tools to help you keep track of your schedule and any side effects you may have. You can find these tools online at www.dana-farber.org/OralChemoDiary.

THIS SPACE RESERVED FOR WRITTEN COMMENTS OR NOTES FOR THE PATIENT AND FAMILY:



Oral Chemotherapy Fact Sheet

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>

The materials included on this page are for informational purposes only. The content is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.

