



## **Chemotherapy: Vismodegib (Erivedge®)**

Pronounced: “vis-moe-DEG-ib”

**How drug is given:** By mouth

**Purpose:** This drug stops the growth of cancer cells in skin cancer

### **How to take this drug:**

- Swallow each capsule whole; do not open or chew. If you have trouble swallowing the capsule, the pharmacist will give you specific instructions.
- You can take this drug with or without food. If it upsets your stomach, take it with food.
- 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.**
- Drugs used for heartburn and stomach problems may interact with Vismodegib. Talk to your cancer care team before taking these.
- Wash your hands after taking this medication

### **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 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:**

- Some of your hair may fall out with treatment. Hair may grow back during treatment.
- Mild to moderate nausea, vomiting, and loss of appetite may occur. You may be given medication to help with this.
- Taste changes may occur. Foods may taste different.
- You may lose weight while taking this drug. Talk to your cancer care team if this bothers you.
- You may feel muscle cramps and tightness. Talk to your cancer care team if this occurs.
- Mild constipation may occur after treatment begins.
  - Increase your fluid intake 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 doctor or nurse.
- Do not use bulk forming laxatives, such as Metamucil®, without talking with your doctor or nurse.
- 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. (You may also feel less interested in your usual activities.)
- 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**.

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

- Do not give blood while taking this drug, and for 7 months after stopping it.

### Sexual health and fertility

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

#### Women

- It is very important to use birth control while taking this drug and for at least 7 months after your last dose if you are having sex, because this drug may be harmful to an unborn baby.
- 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.
- Your period (menstrual cycle) may not be regular for a while or may stop completely and you may not be able to get pregnant.
- Women should not breastfeed while receiving this drug.

#### Men

- It is very important to use birth control while taking this drug and for at least 2 months after your last dose if you are having sex with a woman of child-bearing age, because this drug may be harmful to an unborn baby.

*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>