

ORAL CANCER TREATMENT EDUCATION



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VENETOCLAX

Name of your medication

Generic name — venetoclax (veh-NEH-toh-k lax)
Brand name — Venclexta™ (ven-KLEK-stuh)

Common uses

Venetoclax is used to treat chronic lymphocytic leukemia or small lymphocytic lymphoma. It is also used in select patients with newly-diagnosed acute myeloid leukemia, in combination with azacitadine, decitabine, or low-dose cytarabine.

Venetoclax may also be used for other treatments.

Dose and schedule

Taking venetoclax as instructed is important to allow your treatment to be as effective as possible, so here are some key points to remember.

- ☐ Your dose may vary, but the usual dose of venetoclax is 400 or 600 milligrams (mg) to be taken by mouth at a scheduled time once a day.
- ☐ When you start venetoclax, your care provider will give you instructions about how to safely and correctly increase your dose to reach the recommended dose of 400 mg or 600 mg daily.
- ☐ Venetoclax should be taken with food, at the same time each day.
- ☐ Venetoclax should be taken whole and not crushed, cut, or dissolved. If you are unable to swallow venetoclax, talk to your care provider or pharmacist for possible options.
- ☐ If you miss a dose of venetoclax:
 - **Do not** take the missed dose if it has been more than 8 hours since you should have taken it. Simply take the next dose at the regularly scheduled time.
 - **Do not** take two doses at one time.
 - Be sure to write down if you miss a dose and let your care provider know about any missed doses.

Drug and food interactions

- ☐ Venetoclax has many drug interactions. Inform your care providers of all prescription medications, over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and herbal products that you are taking.
- ☐ Grapefruit or grapefruit juice, Seville oranges (commonly found in marmalades), and star fruit may interact with venetoclax; avoid eating or drinking these during treatment with venetoclax.
- ☐ Talk with your care provider or pharmacist before taking new medications or supplements, or receiving any vaccines.
- ☐ Avoid live vaccines during treatment with venetoclax.

ORAL CANCER TREATMENT EDUCATION



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VENETOCLAX

Storage and handling

Handle venetoclax with care. Just like when chemotherapy is given into the vein, this drug can be toxic, and exposure of the drug to others should be limited.

- ☐ Store venetoclax at room temperature (68°F–77°F) in a dry location away from light.
- ☐ Keep venetoclax out of reach of children and pets.
- ☐ Leave venetoclax in the provided packaging until it is ready to be taken.
- ☐ Whenever possible, give venetoclax to yourself and follow the steps below. If a family member, friend, or caregiver needs to give venetoclax to you, they also need to follow these steps:
 1. Wash hands with soap and water.
 2. Put on gloves to avoid touching the medication. (Gloves are not necessary if you give the drug to yourself.)
 3. Gently transfer the venetoclax from its package to a small medicine or other disposable cup.
 4. Administer the medicine immediately by mouth with water.
 5. Remove gloves and do not use them for anything else.
 6. Throw gloves and medicine cup in household trash.
 7. Wash hands with soap and water.
- ☐ **DURING the first 4 weeks of treatment**, a daily pill box or pill reminder is **not** recommended for use with venetoclax.
- ☐ **AFTER the first 4 weeks**, if a daily pill box or pill reminder is used, a separate one should be used for venetoclax. **Do not** mix other medications into the box with venetoclax. Contact your care team before using:
 - The person filling the box or reminder should wear gloves (gloves are not necessary if you are filling the box or reminder).
 - When empty, the box or reminder should be washed with soap and water before refilling. Be sure to wash hands with soap and water after the task is complete, whether or not gloves are worn
- ☐ If you have any unused venetoclax, **do not** throw it in the trash and **do not** flush it down the sink or toilet. Talk to your care provider or pharmacist about proper disposal of venetoclax.
- ☐ If you are traveling, put your venetoclax's packaging in a sealed plastic bag. Ask your pharmacist if any additional travel precautions are needed.

ORAL CANCER TREATMENT EDUCATION



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VENETOCLAX

Side Effects of Venetoclax

Below are common side effects that have been known to happen in about one third or more of patients taking venetoclax are listed on the left side of this table. You **MAY NOT** experience these side effects. Options to help manage any side effects that do occur are included on the right side of this table. These should be discussed with your care provider. If you experience any side effect you cannot manage or that is not listed here, contact your care provider.

Possible Side Effect	Management
Decreased white blood cells (WBCs) and increased risk for infection	<p>Your WBCs should be monitored by a simple blood test. When your WBCs are low, you are at greater risk of having an infection. Take the following precautions to protect yourself from infection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash your hands often, especially before eating and after using the bathroom. • Avoid crowds and people with fevers, flu, or other infection. • Bathe regularly to keep good personal hygiene. <p>Contact your care provider if you experience any signs or symptoms of an infection, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever (temperature more than 100.4°F or 38°C) • Chills • Sore throat • Burning with urination • Unusual tiredness • A sore that becomes red, is draining, or does not heal <p>Check with your care provider before taking any medicine for a fever or chills.</p>
Diarrhea (loose and/or urgent bowel movements)	<p>Monitor how many bowel movements you have each day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink 8–10 glasses of water or fluid each day unless your care provider has instructed you to limit your fluid intake because of some other health problem. • Eat small, frequent meals throughout the day rather than a few large meals. • Eat bland, low-fiber foods (e.g., bananas, applesauce, potatoes, chicken, rice, toast). • Avoid high-fiber foods (e.g., raw vegetables, raw fruits, whole grains). • Avoid foods that cause gas (e.g., broccoli, beans). • Avoid lactose-containing foods (e.g., yogurt, milk). • Avoid spicy, fried, and greasy foods. <p>Contact your provider if either of the following occurs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of bowel movements you have in a day increases by 4 or more. • You feel dizzy or lightheaded. <p>Your care provider may recommend an over-the-counter medication called loperamide (Imodium®) to help with your diarrhea, but talk to your care provider before starting this medication.</p>

Continued on the next page

ORAL CANCER TREATMENT EDUCATION



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VENETOCLAX

Possible Side Effect	Management
Nausea or vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat and drink slowly. • Drink 8–10 glasses of water or fluid each day unless your care provider has instructed you to limit your fluid intake. • Eat small, frequent meals throughout the day rather than a few large meals. • Eat bland foods; avoid spicy, fried, and greasy foods. • Avoid vigorous exercise immediately after eating. • Don't lie down immediately after eating. • Avoid strong odors. <p>Let your provider know if you experience nausea or vomiting. Your provider may prescribe medication to help with the nausea or vomiting.</p>
Fatigue	<p>You may be more tired than usual or have less energy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay as active as possible, but know it is okay to rest as needed. • Try to do some activity every day. • Plan your activities, and do them at a time of day when you feel a bit more energetic. • Avoid operating heavy machinery if you feel too tired.
Changes in electrolytes and other laboratory values <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low calcium • High glucose • High potassium • High bilirubin • High aspartate aminotransferase (AST) • Low phosphorus • Low sodium • Low albumin 	<p>Changes in some laboratory values may occur and should be monitored by a simple blood test.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may not feel any symptoms if the changes are mild, and they usually are not a sign of a serious problem. • More severe changes may occur, which can be a sign of a serious problem. <p>Notify your care provider if you have any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortness of breath • Chest discomfort • Weakness or fatigue • New aches and pains • Headaches • Dizziness

Continued on the next page

ORAL CANCER TREATMENT EDUCATION



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VENETOCLAX

Possible Side Effect	Management
Decreased platelet count and increased risk of bleeding	<p>Your platelets should be monitored by a simple blood test. When they are low, you may bruise or bleed more easily than usual.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use caution to avoid bruises, cuts, or burns.• Blow your nose gently and do not pick your nose.• Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush and maintain good oral hygiene.• When shaving use an electronic razor instead of razor blades.• Use a nail file instead of a nail clippers. <p>Call your care provider if you have bleeding that won't stop. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A bloody nose that bleeds for more than 5 minutes despite pressure• A cut that continues to ooze despite pressure• Gums that bleed excessively when you floss or brush <p>Seek medical help immediately if you experience any severe headaches, blood in your urine or stool, coughing up blood, or prolonged and uncontrollable bleeding.</p> <p>You may need to take a break or “hold” your medication for medical or dental procedures. Talk to your care provider or dentist before any scheduled procedures.</p>
Decreased hemoglobin, part of the red blood cells that carry iron and oxygen	<p>Your hemoglobin should be monitored by a simple blood test. When your hemoglobin is low, you may notice that you get tired or fatigued more easily.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Try to get 7 to 8 hours of sleep per night.• Avoid operating heavy machinery if you feel too tired.• Find a balance between “work” and “rest.”• Stay as active as possible, but know that it is OK to rest as needed, too.• You might notice that you are more pale than usual. <p>Let your care provider know right away if you experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shortness of breath• Dizziness• Palpitations

Serious side effects of venetoclax

- ☐ Some patients taking venetoclax have experienced tumor lysis syndrome when starting treatment. Your healthcare provider may do blood tests to check for this side effect.
- ☐ Before getting any vaccinations while taking venetoclax talk to your healthcare provider.

If you experience ANY uncontrolled side effect, call your physician or healthcare center immediately:

(INSTITUTIONAL CONTACT INFO)

ORAL CANCER TREATMENT EDUCATION



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VENETOCLAX

Handling body fluids and waste

Because venetoclax remains in your body for several days after it is taken, some of the drug may be present in urine, stool, sweat, or vomit. Once you have started to take venetoclax, it is important to follow the instructions below every day for as long as your treatment lasts. This will keep yourself, loved ones, and the environment as safe as possible.

- ☐ Pregnant women should avoid touching anything that may be soiled with body fluids from the patient.
- ☐ Toilet and septic systems
 - You may use the same toilet, septic tank, and/or sewer that you usually use. If you have a low-flow toilet, close the lid and flush twice to ensure all waste has been discarded.
 - If the toilet or toilet seat becomes soiled with urine, stool, or vomit, clean the surfaces before other people use the toilet.
 - Wash hands with soap and water after using the toilet.
- ☐ If you need a bedpan, be sure your caregiver knows to wear gloves to assist with cleanup and to wash the bedpan with soap and water every day.
- ☐ If you do not have good control of bladder or bowels, use a disposable pad with a plastic back, a diaper, or a sheet to absorb body waste.
- ☐ Wash any skin that has been exposed to body waste or venetoclax with soap and water.
- ☐ Linens or clothing that are soiled with body fluids or body waste should be washed separately from other linens and clothing. If you do not have a washer, place the soiled linens in a plastic bag until they can be washed.
- ☐ Wash hands with soap and water after touching linens or clothing that may be soiled with body fluids.

Pregnancy, sexual activity, and contraception

- ☐ Women should not become pregnant and men should not get a partner pregnant while taking venetoclax. Men and women of childbearing age and potential should use effective contraception during therapy and for a minimum of 30 days after the last dose of venetoclax.
- ☐ Effective contraception could include 1 or more of the following: oral contraceptive, barrier methods, etc.
- ☐ Do not breastfeed while taking venetoclax and for 1 week after the last dose of venetoclax.
- ☐ Inform your care provider if you become pregnant.
- ☐ It is safe to hug and kiss. Special precautions may be needed for sexual activity while on venetoclax, and you are encouraged to ask your care provider.

Obtaining medication

Talk with your care provider about the process for obtaining your venetoclax.

_____ (PHARMACY OR SPECIALTY PHARMACY CONTACT INFO)

ORAL CANCER TREATMENT EDUCATION



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VENETOCLAX

Additional resources

Product website: www.venclexta.com

Product prescribing information: www.rxabbvie.com/pdf/venclexta.pdf

Updated — November 21, 2024

Additional instructions

Important notice: The Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC), Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association (HOPA), National Community Oncology Dispensing Association, Inc. (NCODA), and Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) have collaborated in gathering information for and developing this patient education guide. This guide represents a brief summary of the medication derived from information provided by the drug manufacturer and other resources. This guide does not cover all existing information related to the possible uses, directions, doses, precautions, warnings, interactions, adverse effects, or risks associated with this medication and should not substitute for the advice of a qualified healthcare professional. Provision of this guide is for informational purposes only and does not constitute or imply endorsement, recommendation, or favoring of this medication by ACCC, HOPA, NCODA, or ONS, who assume no liability for and cannot ensure the accuracy of the information presented. The collaborators are not making any representations with respect to the medications whatsoever, and any and all decisions, with respect to such medications, are at the sole risk of the individual consuming the medication. All decisions related to taking this medication should be made with the guidance and under the direction of a qualified healthcare professional.

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