

# Venetoclax

Venclexta®

Cancer-directed targeted therapy in tablets

## Understanding your treatment

What is targeted therapy?

This treatment targets specific molecules, which are inside or on the surface of cancer cells. By targeting cancer cells, the targeted therapy limits damage to healthy cells. This type of treatment can be used alone or in combination with other treatments such as chemotherapy.

How can a targeted therapy help you?

Depending on your type of cancer and the stage of the disease, a targeted therapy can be used to :

- **Destroy** cancer cells
- **Stop** the cancer from spreading
- **Slow** the growth of cancer cells

How will you feel while on a targeted therapy?

Even though those treatments target cancer cells and limit damage to healthy cells, side effects can still arise.

Not everyone has side effects and each person's experience may differ. Side effects and their severity are not representative of the treatment's effect or lack thereof.

This document presents the most frequent side effects that your targeted therapy causes.

### Medication

#### **Venetoclax**

Tablets to take by mouth

### Administration

Tablets to be taken by mouth once daily at the same time every day, with food

#### **On a continuous basis**

Gradual increase in doses according to the following calendar:

Week 1 : 20 mg (2 tablets of 10 mg)

Week 2 : 50 mg (1 tablet of 50 mg)

Week 3 : 100 mg (1 tablet of 100 mg)

Week 4 : 200 mg (2 tablets of 100 mg)

From week 5 on : 400 mg (4 tablets of 100 mg)



A **blood test** will be done throughout your treatment. Depending on the results and side effects, the dose of the medication might be adjusted or the treatment might be interrupted if necessary.

## How to take your medication?

- Take your venetoclax tablets as prescribed once a day at the same time everyday. Take your tablets with food.
- Tablets must be taken whole. Do not chew, split or crush the tablets.
- **If you forget a dose**, you may take it as soon as you remember if it has been less than 8 hours since the missed dose. Do not double your next dose. Try, however, to take your tablets at the same time every day and in the same way (with food).

## Storing and handling your medicines



- Wash your hands immediately after handling your medication.
- Keep your medication at room temperature, out of the reach of children and pets as well as protected from light, heat or moisture. Do not keep medicines in the bathroom.
- Don't throw away unused medication at home. Bring it back to your pharmacy to be destroyed safely. You may dispose of the empty containers in your home garbage can.
- If your medication inadvertently comes in contact with the surrounding surface, wash and rub the surface with water and soap.
- Caregivers should wear disposable gloves if they prepare medication for you. You can find disposable gloves at your local community pharmacy.
- Keep your medications in their original container and do not mix them with other drugs.

## How can this treatment affect your daily life?

### Fatigue and appetite



- You may experience **fatigue** during your treatments. This is usually temporary and may be related to different reasons (medication, stress, the disease). Maintain a good level of activity but rest when you feel the need to.
- Your **appetite may diminish**. Eat more often, in smaller quantities.
- Your **sense of taste may be altered**. Enhance foods with *fines herbes* or lemon juice. Eating fruits and unsweetened candies, chewing non-sugared gums, etc., may mask the metallic taste.
- **Alcohol** in small quantities is allowed and will not affect the efficacy of the treatments.

### Sex life and birth control

- You can have an **active sexual** life during your treatments. However, a decrease in your sexual drive may occur during this period. This may also be influenced by different factors (fatigue, stress, etc.).

- It's safe to kiss, to touch, to hold hands, to sleep in the same bed and to cuddle.
- The effect of the drug on male or female fertility is unknown. This medication may have an effect on the menstrual cycle as well as spermatozoid production. However, this does not prevent erection or sexual activity and as such, you can have an active sexual life during your treatments. Pregnancy is possible and this medication could be harmful to the fetus. The use of an effective method of contraception is highly recommended for both men and women while on treatment and up to 30 days after the end of the treatment. Breast-feeding is contraindicated during treatment.

### Foods and medicines to avoid



- **Grapefruit**  
You must avoid consuming grapefruit, Seville orange, starfruit, pomelo, pomegranate or foods containing them. The consumption of those foods could increase the side effects of your medication.

### Tips and precautions



- **Sit down to urinate and fold down the toilet lid**  
Women as well as men should sit down to urinate and fold down the toilet lid before flushing in order to avoid splashing. Flush twice to make sure everything has been flushed away. Follow these precautions during your treatments (or according to instructions from your cancer center).
- **Bodily fluids**  
During your treatment, it's possible that a certain quantity of the medication is found in some bodily fluids or secretions that you produce, such as urine, stools, vomit, sperm and vaginal discharge. In order to protect the environment and those living with you, follow the instructions given by your cancer center about the right way to handle and dispose of the bodily fluids.



- **Over the counter medicines, natural health products and vaccines**  
Consult your healthcare team:
  - if you intend to take any other medication (with or without a prescription) or natural health products.
  - if you need to receive a vaccine.

This could decrease your treatment's efficacy or increase its side effects.
- **Always have on hand the complete list of your medications**  
Be sure to always have on hand the complete list of your medications, dietary supplements, vitamins and other natural health products. Give it to you doctor and your pharmacist. It is important to make them aware of any change.
- **Drink plenty of fluids**  
It is very important to drink plenty of fluids during your treatment, especially during the first few cycles. Furthermore, you could be prescribed a medication (allopurinol) to decrease the risk of problems related to the rapid destruction of abnormal cells and to protect your kidneys.



# What are the side effects of your treatment?

This fact sheet aims to let you know the side effects most commonly seen following the administration of your treatment. Please note that when you take any medication, there is a possibility that it causes rare side effects and it is difficult to predict which patients will be affected.

## ADVERSE EFFECTS

### Tumor lysis syndrome

A complication called **tumor lysis syndrome** might occur at the beginning of your treatment. This reaction is caused by rapid destruction of abnormal cells and can cause damage to your kidneys or other serious side effects.

### Decrease in white blood cells

A decrease in **white blood cells** will occur during treatment. You may be at higher risk of infections.

## MANAGEMENT

To prevent this complication :

- Venetoclax will be started at a low dose and will be increased gradually over a few weeks.
- **Drink** lots of water and liquids (1,5 to 2 liters per day or 6 to 8 cups of 250 ml per day) starting 2 to 3 days before first dose and before each dose increase unless otherwise recommended by your doctor.
- For some patients, intravenous hydration might be necessary.
- A medication (example: allopurinol) will be prescribed to decrease the risk of experiencing problems associated with the rapid destruction of abnormal cells.
- Blood tests will be done regularly, especially at the beginning of your treatment and before each dose increase.

- Wash your hands often.
- Avoid coming into contact with people who have contagious diseases.
- Contact a member of your healthcare team quickly if you notice any signs of infection (chills, cough, sore throat, pain while urinating, etc.).
- If you have a fever, do not take acetaminophen (Ex: Tylenol®, Atasol®) and anti-inflammatory medication (Ex : Motrin®, Advil®, Aleve®, etc.).

**⊘ Stop your treatment and go to the Emergency Room if:**

- you have a fever of 38,3 °C (101°F) or above
- or
- you have a fever of 38 °C (100,4 °F) twice an hour apart.



## ADVERSE EFFECTS

## MANAGEMENT

### Nausea

Light nausea and vomiting may occur during your treatment.

- You will be prescribed medication to prevent nausea if needed.
- ✔ **Continue your treatment if:** you have light nausea that does not prevent you entirely from eating. Make sure to continue your medication prescribed for your nausea.
- ⚠ **Continue your treatment and call your healthcare team as soon as possible if:** you have significant nausea, experience vomiting that is partially preventing you from eating. Make sure to continue your medication prescribed for your nausea.
- ✖ **Stop your treatment and call your healthcare team as quickly as possible or go to the Emergency Room if:** you have severe nausea or repeated vomiting that prevents you completely from eating.

### Diarrhea

Diarrhea (loose, watery stools) can sometimes occur during your treatment.

- Drink lots of liquids (8 to 10 glasses a day) unless otherwise instructed by your doctor.
- Eat and drink often but in small quantities.
- ✔ **Continue your treatment if:** you have light diarrhea (2 to 3 additional loose stools per day compared to usual before starting your treatment). Start loperamide (Imodium®) by taking 2 tablets first followed by one tablet after each loose stool for a maximum of 8 tablets per 24 hours period. Contact a member of your healthcare team if the diarrhea does not improve after taking loperamide for 24 hours.
- ⚠ **Continue your treatment and call your healthcare team as soon as possible if:** you experience more than 4 to 6 additional loose stools per day compared to usual before starting your treatment). Start loperamide (Imodium®) by taking 2 tablets first followed by one tablet after each loose stool for a maximum of 8 tablets per 24 hours period).
- ✖ **Stop your treatment and call your healthcare team as quickly as possible or go to the Emergency Room if:** you have 7 or more additional loose stools per day compared to usual before starting your treatment, if you are not able to hold it in (incontinence) or if you have diarrhea with a fever.



## ADVERSE EFFECTS

## MANAGEMENT

### Decrease in platelets

A decrease in platelets may occur during your treatment. You may bruise or bleed more easily than you normally do.

- Use a tooth brush with soft bristles.
- Consult your pharmacist before taking over the counter medications containing Aspirin® or other anti-inflammatory medication (e.g. Advil®, Motrin®, Aleve®, etc.).
- Contact a member of your healthcare team if you bruise more easily than you normally do or if you have a tendency to bleed easily from the nose or the gums.

### Hair loss

Usually there is **no hair loss** with this treatment.

## RARE ADVERSE EFFECTS THAT CAN BE SEVERE OR SERIOUS

**If the following side effects occur, stop your treatment and call your healthcare team as quickly as possible or go to the Emergency Room:**

- Confusion, seizure, dark or cloudy urine, heart palpitations, weakness

PHARMACIST : \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE : \_\_\_\_\_

FROM \_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_ TO \_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_ (MONDAY TO FRIDAY)

This fact sheet has been prepared by a sub-committee of the Comité national de l'évolution de la pratique des soins pharmaceutiques of the Programme québécois de cancérologie of the Ministry of Health and Social Services in consultation with the Comité de l'évolution de la pratique en oncologie of the Institut national d'excellence en santé et en services sociaux.

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## Treatment Diary | Vénétoclax 30 days

CYCLE START DATE :

LEGEND (Refer to the information sheet for more details.)

- ✔ Continue your treatment.
- ⚠ Continue your treatment and contact your healthcare team as soon as possible.
- ✖ Stop your treatment and contact your healthcare team without delay or go to the Emergency Room.

### DAYS OF CYCLE

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30

(Record the dose taken)

mg

Date (dd-mm)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DECREASE IN WHITE BLOOD CELLS</b>																														
✖ You have a fever of 38,3°C (101°F) or above or you have a fever of 38°C (100,4°F) twice an hour apart with or without symptoms of infection.																														
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