

# Vemurafenib

Zelboraf®

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

#### **Vemurafenib**

Tablets to take by mouth

### Administration

To be taken twice daily (approximately every 12 hours)

Take with or without food

**On a continuous basis**



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

## How to take your medication?

- Take your vemurafenib tablets as prescribed twice daily approximately every 12 hours. You may take your pills before or during your meal with a large glass of water or juice. If you have difficulty tolerating it, for example, if it causes a stomach ache, take it while you eat.
- 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 there is more than 4 hours left before your next dose. Do not double your next dose. Try, however, to take your pills at the same time every day and in the same way (either with or without food).

## Storing and handling your medicines



- Wash your hands immediately after handling your tablets.
- 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 the pills inadvertently come 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?

### Appetite

- 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 6 months 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 vemurafenib.

## 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 the course of your treatment, your medicine may be found in certain liquids 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 your doctor and your pharmacist. It is important to make them aware of any change.



# 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

## MANAGEMENT

### Muscle and bone pain

You may experience muscle, bone and joint pain and cramps that may occur during your treatment.

- If you present with bone or muscle pain, speak with a member of your healthcare team who will recommend an appropriate pain reliever.

### Fatigue

You may experience fatigue during your treatments. This is usually temporary and may be related to different reasons (medication, stress, the disease, anemia, dehydration, ...)

- Maintain a good level of activity but rest when you feel the need to.

### Hair loss

Depending on the individual, **thinning of the hair** may occur. In general, this happens 2 to 3 weeks after the start of the treatment. However, don't worry; your hair will grow back after treatments have ended.

- Use gentle shampoo.
- In order to slow hair loss, avoid brushing hair vigorously.
- Avoid hair spray, dyes and perms.

### Skin problems

You might experience some **skin reactions** during the course of your treatment. These reactions usually present with:

- Your skin may become more **sensitive to the sun**. Reaction can occur **even behind a window or car window**.
- A **rash** may appear on the upper body, forearms and sometimes on the face. These reactions usually disappear on their own.
- Your **skin** may become **drier**.

### To help prevent or decrease these reactions:

- Avoid sun exposure all day long whether you are indoors or outdoors because the rays pass through glass (e.g., house or car windows).
- Use everyday a broad-spectrum sunscreen (SPF of 30 or more) which also offers protection against UVA rays.
- Wear a hat and clothing that covers your arms and legs.
- Apply moisturizing lotions or creams frequently to reduce or eliminate itching.
- Use fragrance-free, alcohol-free mild soap or cleaning products. Also use bath or shower oils to avoid skin dryness.
- Use liquid shower gels instead of soap.
- Take oatmeal baths (Aveeno®).

## ADVERSE EFFECTS

## MANAGEMENT

**Redness** and **itchiness** may develop.

If despite all these measures, skin reactions appear:

- ✔ **Continue your treatment but contact your healthcare team if :** you develop skin problems such as pimples or redness, scattered on your skin but that are not itchy or tender. Continue to apply moisturizing cream.
- ⚠ **Stop your treatment and contact your healthcare team as soon as possible if:** you develop skin problems such as pimples or redness, scattered on your skin and they itch or are tender. Continue to apply moisturizing cream.
- ✖ **Stop your treatment and contact your healthcare team without delay or head to the Emergency Room:** if you develop skin problems, such as pimples, blisters or redness all over your body, pain or swelling.

### Nausea

Moderate nausea and vomiting may occur during your treatment.

- You will be prescribed medication to be taken as needed if you have nausea.
- ✔ **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 can sometimes occur with 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.



⚠ **Stop 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.

### Headaches

You may experience headaches.

- If this happens and is bothering you, talk to a member of your healthcare team who will recommend a medication for pain.

### Skin lesions

Skin lesions, that may or may not be cancerous, sometimes appear 7 to 8 weeks after the start of treatment.

- Tell a member of your healthcare team about any change on your skin like a wound, wart or red bump that is bleeding and does not heal.

### Eye problems

Rarely, eye disorders such as pain, redness, blurred vision or decreased vision may occur.

- Rapidly contact a member of your healthcare team.

### Decrease in white blood cells

A decrease in **white blood cells** is unlikely during treatment. You may be at higher risk of infections during this period.

- Wash your hands often.
- During this period, 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: Motri®, 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

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apart.

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**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:**

- Fast or irregular heartbeats

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.

DEVELOPED **MAY 2013** | REVISED **FEBRUARY 2020**



# Treatment Diary | Vemurafenib 28 days

CYCLE START DATE :





## LEGEND

- ✔ Continue your treatment.
- ⚠ **Continue** your treatment and contact your healthcare team as soon as possible (if nausea).
- ⚠ **Stop** your treatment and contact your healthcare team as soon as possible (if skin problems, diarrhea).
- 🛑 **Stop** your treatment and contact your healthcare team without delay or go to the Emergency Room.

Refer to the information sheet for more details

		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
(Record the dose taken)	mg (am)																												
	mg (pm)																												
Date (dd-mm)																													
<b>SKIN PROBLEMS</b>		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
✔ Skin problems that you did not have before such as pimples or redness, scattered on your skin but that are <b>not</b> itchy or tender.																													
⚠ Skin problems that you did not have before such as pimples or redness, scattered on your skin and they itch or are tender.																													
🛑 Skin problems that you did not have before such as pimples or redness all over your body, pain or swelling.																													
<b>NAUSEA AND VOMITING</b>		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
✔ Light nausea that does not prevent you entirely from eating.																													
⚠ Significant nausea or if you experience vomiting that is partially preventing you from eating.																													



	Severe nausea or repeated vomiting that prevents you completely from eating.																													
	<b>DIARRHEA</b>	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	
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