

# Lenalidomide

Revlimid®

**Chemotherapy** capsules

## Understanding your treatment

What is chemotherapy?

Chemotherapy is a treatment against cancer that uses drugs to kill cancer cells. Chemotherapy can be used alone or in combination with other treatments such as radiotherapy.

How can chemotherapy help you?

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

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

How will you feel while on chemotherapy?

Chemotherapy is used to kill abnormal cells in your body. It can also damage healthy cells that divide quickly. Side effects occur when healthy cells are damaged.

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.

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

Medication

**Lenalidomide**

Capsules to take by mouth

Administration

Take once daily with or without food

**Take for 21 days followed by a 7-day rest period**

**Cycle :** treatment repeated every 28 days for 4 cycles



A **blood test** will be done regularly. If necessary, the dose of lenalidomide may be adjusted or the treatment may be delayed depending on the blood test results or on the side effects that you may have had with the previous treatment.

**Pre-menopausal woman:** a blood test will be required before the start of treatment to assess whether or not you are pregnant. The blood test will be mandatory every month thereafter.

## How to take your medication?

- Lenalidomide is dispensed through a specialty pharmacy that is different from your usual pharmacy.
- Take your lenalidomide capsules as prescribed once a day at the same time every day. You may take your medication 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. You must take your lenalidomide capsules on a continuous basis for 21 days followed by a 7-day rest.
- Capsules must be taken whole. Do not break, chew or open the capsules.
- **If you forget a dose**, you may take it as soon as you remember if it has been less than 12 hours since the missed dose but do not double your next dose. However, try 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 capsules.
- 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 the specialty pharmacy that dispensed it to you or call this pharmacy to find out how to return it safely. You may dispose of the empty containers in your home garbage can.
- If the medication inadvertently comes in contact with a countertop or furniture, 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



- **Pre-menopausal women** must use **two different contraceptive methods**, starting at least 4 weeks prior to the beginning of lenalidomide and continuing for at least 4 weeks after the end of the treatment. Lenalidomide may cause **birth defects** or fetal death. Avoid taking lenalidomide if you are pregnant or trying to get pregnant. If you cannot use hormonal contraception (implants or injections), you must use 2 mechanical barriers (condom, diaphragm, cervical cap, contraceptive sponge). The contraceptive pill is not recommended with your treatment.
- **Men** must use a condom if they have sex with a pre-menopausal woman for the total duration of treatment and up to 4 weeks after the end of the treatment. This is a necessary measure even in men who have had a vasectomy.
- You can have an active sexual life during your treatment. However, a decrease in your sexual drive may occur during this period. This may also be influenced by different factors (fatigue, stress, etc.). Furthermore, do not forget that you must use appropriate methods of contraception as lenalidomide may cause birth defects or fetal death.
- If you had unprotected sex or if your partner is pregnant: notify your doctor immediately.

## 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 and for up to 48 hours after your treatment (or according to instructions from your cancer center).
- **Bodily fluids**  
During the treatment period, 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 the complete list of your medications on hand**  
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

### Decrease in white blood cells

A decrease in the white blood cells will occur during your treatment. You could be at higher risk to contract infections.

- Wash your hands often.
  - Avoid coming in 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 you urinate, etc.).
  - In case of fever, do not take acetaminophen (Ex. Tylenol®, Atasol®) and anti-inflammatory medication (Ex: Motrin®, Advil®, Aleve®).
- ⊘ 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.

### Fatigue

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

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

### Diarrhea

You may sometimes experience diarrhea.

- 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-hour 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-hour period.

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- ❌ **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.
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**Constipation**

You may experience constipation.

- Exercise if possible.
  - Drink lots of liquids (at least 8 glasses a day) (unless otherwise instructed by your doctor).
  - Eat foods that are rich in fiber (cereals, fruits and vegetables).
  - Communicate with a member of your healthcare team who, if necessary, will recommend appropriate laxatives.
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**Skin rash**

A skin rash, usually mild, may occur during your treatment. It generally involves the trunk, the arms and legs and can be associated with itchiness. The rash may go away after the first 2 to 3 weeks of treatment.

- ✅ **Continue your treatment, but contact your healthcare team if:** you develop a skin rash, such as pimples or redness **without** any itchiness or tenderness.
  - ⚠️ **Continue your treatment and call your healthcare team as soon as possible:** you develop a skin rash, such as pimples or redness **with** itchiness or tenderness.
  - ❌ **Stop your treatment and call your healthcare team as quickly as possible or go to the Emergency Room if:** you develop a skin rash, such as pimples or redness all over your body with pain and your skin feels hot to the touch.
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**Muscle and bone pain**

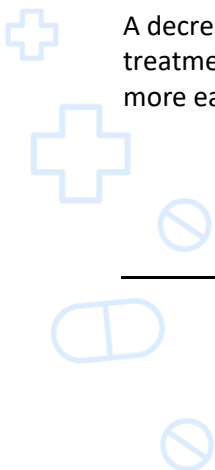
You may experience muscle, bone and joint pain and cramps that may occur during your treatment.

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

A decrease in platelets will occur during 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.
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## ADVERSE EFFECTS

## MANAGEMENT

### Nausea

Nausea and vomiting, usually light, may occur during your treatment.

- You will be prescribed medication to take as needed to relieve 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.

### Fluid retention

A gradual fluid retention may occur with your treatment and may present itself by swelling of the hands, ankles and feet.

- Raise your feet while sitting.
- Avoid wearing tight clothes or shoes.
- Notify a member of your healthcare team if you are gaining weight rapidly, if you experience some swelling or if you are easily short of breath.

### Shortness of breath, with or without cough

You may experience shortness of breath, with or without cough. These symptoms are rare and could be related to your treatment.

- If you notice any of these effects, contact a member of your healthcare team as soon as possible.

### Dizziness

You may experience dizziness at any point during your treatment.

- Be careful not to stand up too fast when you are laying down or sitting.
- If this occurs and bothers you, speak to a member of your healthcare team.

### 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:**

- Pain with or without warmth and redness on the calves or the legs accompanied by sudden difficulty breathing
- Sudden difficulty breathing with cough and/or persistent fever.

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 **FEBRUARY 2011** | REVISED **OCTOBER 2019**







## Treatment Diary | Lenalidomide 28 days

START CYCLE DATE :

### LEGEND

-  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.

Refer to the information sheet for more details

		TREATMENT																					REST						
(Record the dose taken)		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
mg																													
Date (dd-mm)																													
<b>DECREASE IN WHITE BLOOD CELLS</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
	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.																												
<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
	Light diarrhea: you have 2 to 3 additional loose stools per day compared to usual.																												
	Moderate diarrhea: you have 4 to 6 additional loose stools per day compared to usual.																												
	Severe diarrhea: you have 7 or more additional loose stools per day compared to usual before starting your treatment or you are not able to hold it in (incontinence).																												



SKIN PROBLEMS		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.																												
NAUSEA AND VOMITING		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.																												