PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Erlotinib

This information from UpToDate® Lexidrug™ explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

Brand Names: US

Tarceva [DSC]

Brand Names: Canada

APO-Erlotinib; NAT-Erlotinib [DSC]; PMS-Erlotinib; Tarceva [DSC]; TEVA-Erlotinib

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat cancer.

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If you are being treated with a platinum-based chemo drug like cisplatin or carboplatin.

- If you take any other drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins). There are many drugs that interact with this drug, like certain drugs that are used for infections, seizures, or stomach or bowel problems.
- If you are breast-feeding. Do not breast-feed while you take this drug and for 2 weeks after your last dose.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- If you have upset stomach, throwing up, diarrhea, or decreased appetite, talk with your doctor. There may be ways to lower these side effects.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the

doctor. Talk with the doctor.

- Severe and sometimes deadly bleeding can happen when warfarin is taken with this drug. If you are taking warfarin or another drug like warfarin, you may need to have your blood work checked more closely. If you have questions, talk with your doctor.
- If you smoke, talk with your doctor.
- If you start or stop smoking, talk with your doctor. How much drug you take may need to be changed.
- If you drink grapefruit juice or eat grapefruit often, talk with your doctor.
- It is common to get a rash with this drug but other skin reactions may also happen. Sometimes, these rashes and skin reactions can be very bad and may need treatment in the hospital. Call your doctor right away if you have acne, skin redness, or a skin rash that bothers you or does not go away. Call your doctor right away if you have redness or irritation of the palms of hands or soles of feet.
- You may get sunburned more easily. Avoid sun, sunlamps, and tanning beds. Use sunscreen and wear clothing and eyewear that protects you from the sun.
- Use an alcohol-free lotion or cream to help with pimple-like skin effects or dry skin.

- Lung, liver, and kidney problems have happened with this drug. Holes in the GI (gastrointestinal tract) have also happened. Sometimes, these have been deadly. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- This drug may cause harm to the unborn baby if you take it while you are pregnant.
- If you may become pregnant, you must use birth control while taking this drug and for some time after the last dose. Ask your doctor how long to use birth control. If you get pregnant, call your doctor right away.

What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?

WARNING/CAUTION: Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Signs of infection like fever, chills, very bad sore throat, ear or sinus pain, cough, more sputum or change in color

of sputum, pain with passing urine, mouth sores, or wound that will not heal.

- Signs of liver problems like dark urine, tiredness, decreased appetite, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.
- Signs of kidney problems like unable to pass urine, change in how much urine is passed, blood in the urine, or a big weight gain.
- Signs of lung or breathing problems like shortness of breath or other trouble breathing, cough, or fever.
- Weakness on 1 side of the body, trouble speaking or thinking, change in balance, drooping on one side of the face, or blurred eyesight.
- Chest pain or pressure.
- Any unexplained bruising or bleeding.
- Change in eyesight, eye pain, or severe eye irritation.
- If bright lights bother your eyes.
- Depression.
- Severe stomach pain.
- Throwing up blood or throw up that looks like coffee grounds.
- Black, tarry, or bloody stools.

- A severe skin reaction (Stevens-Johnson syndrome/toxic epidermal necrolysis) may happen. It can cause severe health problems that may not go away, and sometimes death. Get medical help right away if you have signs like red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin (with or without fever); red or irritated eyes; or sores in your mouth, throat, nose, or eyes.

What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

- Feeling tired or weak.
- Itching.
- Diarrhea, upset stomach, or throwing up.
- Decreased appetite.
- Mouth irritation or mouth sores.
- Headache.
- Back, muscle, or joint pain.
- Change in hair or nails.
- Dry skin.
- Weight loss.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1- 800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at https://www.fda.gov/medwatch.

How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

- Take this drug on an empty stomach. Take at least 1 hour before or 2 hours after eating.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.
- If you need to take an antacid or a drug like famotidine or ranitidine, talk with your doctor about how to take it while taking this drug.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Take a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the

missed dose and go back to your normal time.

- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

- Store at room temperature in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

General drug facts

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else's drugs.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- Some drugs may have another patient information

leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.

- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a

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If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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