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PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Nilotinib

This information from Lexicomp® 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

Tasigna

## Brand Names: Canada

Tasigna

## Warning

- This drug may cause a prolonged QT interval (a type of heartbeat that is not normal). If this happens, the chance of other unsafe and sometimes deadly abnormal heartbeats may be raised. Sudden deaths have happened in people taking this drug. Do not give this drug if your child has low potassium or magnesium levels or has ever had a long QT on ECG. Your child's heartbeat will be watched often with an ECG. If you have questions, talk with your child's doctor.
- Do not give this drug if your child is taking certain other drugs, like any drugs that can raise the chance of a prolonged QT interval (a type of heartbeat that is not normal). There are many drugs that interact with this drug. Talk with your child's doctor and pharmacist to make sure it is safe to give this drug with all of your child's drugs.
- Give this drug on an empty stomach. Give at least 1 hour before or 2 hours after a meal.

## What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat leukemia.

- It may be given to your child for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

## **What do I need to tell the doctor BEFORE my child takes this drug?**

- If your child has an allergy to this drug or any part of this drug.
- If your child is allergic to any drugs like this one or any other drugs, foods, or other substances. Tell the doctor about the allergy and what signs your child had, like rash; hives; itching; shortness of breath; wheezing; cough; swelling of face, lips, tongue, or throat; or any other signs.
- If your child cannot have galactose or your child has lactase deficiency, lactose intolerance, or glucose-galactose malabsorption.
- If your child takes any drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) that must not be taken with this drug, like some other drugs used for HIV or certain drugs used for seizures, infection, or stomach or bowel problems. There are many drugs that must not be taken with this drug.
- If your child is taking St. John's wort. Do not give St. John's wort with this drug. This drug may not work as well.

### **If your child is breast-feeding a baby:**

- Be sure your child does not breast-feed a baby while taking this drug and for 2 weeks after the last dose.

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

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

## **What are some things I need to know or do while my child takes this drug?**

- Tell all of your child's health care providers that your child is taking this drug. This includes your child's doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.

- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- Your child may have more chance of getting infections. Have your child wash hands often. Avoid crowds and people with infections, colds, or flu.
- Your child may bleed more easily. Make sure your child is careful and avoids injury. Be sure your child has a soft toothbrush.
- Very bad and sometimes deadly bleeding problems have happened with this drug. Talk with the doctor.
- If your child has an upset stomach or diarrhea, is throwing up, or is not hungry, talk with the doctor. There may be ways to lower these side effects.
- This drug may lower blood flow to the heart, brain, or leg. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- Talk with the doctor before your child gets any vaccines. Use of some vaccines with this drug may either raise the chance of very bad infection or make the vaccine not work as well.
- If your child needs to take an antacid or a drug like famotidine or ranitidine, talk with your child's doctor about how to give it while your child takes this drug.
- Avoid giving your child grapefruit and grapefruit juice.
- If your child is in remission and your child's doctor tells you to stop giving this drug, your child may have more muscle and bone signs than before treatment was stopped. These signs include arm, leg, bone, spine, muscle, or joint pain. If you have questions, talk with your child's doctor.
- Use with care in children. Talk with the doctor.
- This drug may affect growth in children and teens in some cases. They may need regular growth checks. Talk with the doctor.
- As your child grows, your child's doctor may change your child's dose. Give this drug as your child's doctor has told you.
- If your child is of childbearing age, a pregnancy test will need to be done before starting this drug to make sure she is not pregnant.

**If your child is or may be sexually active:**

- Have your child use birth control to prevent pregnancy while taking this drug and for at least 2 weeks after stopping this drug.

### **If your child is pregnant:**

- This drug may cause harm to the unborn baby if your child takes it during pregnancy.
- If your child gets pregnant while taking this drug or within 2 weeks after the last dose, call the doctor right away.

### **What are some side effects that I need to call my child's 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 child's doctor or get medical help right away if your child has 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 a pancreas problem (pancreatitis) like very bad stomach pain, very bad back pain, or very bad upset stomach or throwing up.
- Signs of bleeding like throwing up blood or throw up that looks like coffee grounds; coughing up blood; blood in the urine; black, red, or tarry stools; bleeding from the gums; vaginal bleeding that is not normal; bruises without a reason or that get bigger; or any bleeding that is very bad or that you cannot stop.
- Signs of electrolyte problems like mood changes, confusion, muscle pain or weakness, a heartbeat that does not feel normal, seizures, not hungry, or very bad upset stomach or throwing up.
- Signs of high blood sugar like confusion, feeling sleepy, more thirst, more

hungry, passing urine more often, flushing, fast breathing, or breath that smells like fruit.

- 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, a fast heartbeat, or passing out.
- A heartbeat that does not feel normal.
- Dizziness.
- Shortness of breath, a big weight gain, or swelling in the arms or legs.
- Change in eyesight.
- Very bad headache.
- Feeling very tired or weak.
- Leg pain, leg feels cold, or change in skin color of the leg.
- Liver problems have happened. Call the doctor right away if your child gets signs of liver problems like dark urine, feeling tired, not hungry, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.
- Patients with cancer who take this drug may be at greater risk of getting a severe health problem called tumor lysis syndrome (TLS). This may lead to death. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has a fast or abnormal heartbeat; any passing out; trouble passing urine; muscle weakness or cramps; upset stomach, throwing up, diarrhea, or not able to eat; or feels sluggish.

## **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 child's doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother your child or do not go away:

- Headache.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Belly pain.
- Not hungry.

- Constipation.
- Diarrhea.
- Muscle or joint pain.
- Back pain.
- Hair loss.
- Not able to sleep.
- Signs of a common cold.
- Nose and throat irritation.
- Feeling tired or weak.
- Itching.
- Night sweats.
- Dry skin.
- Muscle spasm.

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

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

## **How is this drug best given?**

Give this drug as ordered by your child's doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

- Give this drug on an empty stomach. Give at least 1 hour before or 2 hours after a meal.
- Give this drug with a full glass of water.
- Have your child swallow whole. Do not let your child chew, break, or crush.
- Capsule may be opened and contents sprinkled on 1 teaspoon of applesauce. Have your child swallow within 15 minutes after mixing. Do not store for future use.
- To gain the most benefit, do not miss giving your child doses.

- Keep giving this drug to your child as you have been told by your child's doctor or other health care provider, even if your child feels well.

## **What do I do if my child misses a dose?**

- Skip the missed dose and go back to your child's normal time.
- Do not give 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

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

- Store at room temperature.
- Store 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 child's symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your child's doctor.
- Do not share your child's drug with others and do not give anyone else's drug to your child.
- Keep a list of all your child's drugs (prescription, natural products, vitamins, OTC) with you. Give this list to your child's doctor.
- Talk with your child's doctor before giving your child any new drug, including prescription or OTC, natural products, or vitamins.
- 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.
- 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 information should not be used to decide whether or not to take this medicine or any other medicine. Only the healthcare provider has the knowledge and training to decide which medicines are right for a specific patient. This information does not endorse any medicine as safe, effective, or approved for treating any patient or health condition. This is only a brief summary of general information about this medicine. It does NOT include all information about the possible uses, directions, warnings, precautions, interactions, adverse effects, or risks that may apply to this medicine. This information is not specific medical advice and does not replace information you receive from the healthcare provider. You must talk with the healthcare provider for complete information about the risks and benefits of using this medicine.

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If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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