

Venetoclax (Venclexta)

About This Drug

Venetoclax is used to treat cancer. It is given orally (by mouth).

Possible Side Effects

- Bone marrow suppression. This is a decrease in the number of white blood cells, red blood cells, and platelets. This may raise your risk of infection, make you tired and weak, and raise your risk of bleeding.
- Nausea and vomiting (throwing up)
- Diarrhea (loose bowel movements)
- Constipation (not able to move bowels)
- Pain in your mouth/throat
- Pain in your abdomen
- Abnormal bleeding – symptoms may be coughing up blood, throwing up blood (may look like coffee grounds), red or black tarry bowel movements, abnormally heavy menstrual flow, nosebleeds, or any other unusual bleeding.
- Swelling of the hands, feet, or any other part of the body
- Fever and neutropenic fever - a type of fever that can develop when you have a very low number of white blood cells which can be life-threatening.
- Sepsis - a serious illness from an infection
- Tiredness
- Bone and muscle pain
- Feeling dizzy
- Upper respiratory tract infection and pneumonia
- Cough
- Trouble breathing
- Rash
- Low blood pressure

Note: Each of the side effects above was reported in 20% or greater of patients treated with venetoclax. All possible side effects are not included. Your side effects may be different depending on your cancer diagnosis, condition, or if you are receiving other drugs in combination. Please discuss any concerns or questions with your medical team.

Warnings and Precautions

- Tumor lysis syndrome. This drug may act on the cancer cells very quickly. This may affect how your kidneys work and can be life-threatening.
- Severe decrease in the number of white blood cells. This may raise your risk of infection.
- Risk of severe and life-threatening infections

Note: *Some of the side effects above are very rare. If you have concerns and/or questions, please discuss them with your medical team.*

Important Information

- Talk to your doctor before receiving any vaccinations during your treatment. Some vaccinations are not recommended while receiving venetoclax.

How to Take Your Medication

- Swallow the medicine whole with a meal and water at approximately the same time each day. Do not chew, break, cut or crush it.
- **Missed dose:** If you have missed your dose by more than 8 hours, skip the missed dose and continue with your regular dosing schedule, and contact your physician. If you have missed a dose and it is within 8 hours of the time you usually take your dose, take the missed dose as soon as possible and then continue with your regular dosing schedule.
- If you vomit a dose, take your next dose at the regular time. Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.
- **Handling:** Wash your hands after handling your medicine. Your caretakers should not handle your medicine with bare hands and should wear latex gloves.
- This drug may be present in the saliva, tears, sweat, urine, stool, vomit, semen, and vaginal secretions. Talk to your doctor and/or your nurse about the necessary precautions to take during this time.
- **Storage:** Store this medicine in the original container at room temperature. Protect from moisture.
- **Disposal of unused medicine:** Do not flush any expired and/or unused medicine down the toilet or drain unless you are specifically instructed to do so on the medication label. Some facilities have take-back programs and/or other options. If you do not have a take-back program in your area, then please discuss with your nurse or your doctor how to dispose of unused medicine.

Treating Side Effects

- Manage tiredness by pacing your activities for the day.
- Be sure to include periods of rest between energy-draining activities.
- Get regular exercise. If you feel too tired to exercise vigorously, try taking a short walk.
- If you are dizzy, get up slowly after sitting or lying.
- To decrease the risk of infection, wash your hands regularly.



- Avoid close contact with people who have a cold, the flu, or other infections.
- Take your temperature as your doctor or nurse tells you, and whenever you feel like you may have a fever.
- To help decrease the risk of bleeding, use a soft toothbrush. Check with your nurse before using dental floss.
- Be very careful when using knives or tools.
- Use an electric shaver instead of a razor.
- Drink plenty of fluids (a minimum of 6 to 8 glasses per day is recommended). To help decrease your risk of tumor lysis syndrome, you may need to drink plenty of fluids 2 days before your first dose of venetoclax, on the day of the first dose and anytime your dose is increased.
- If you throw up or have diarrhea, you should drink more fluids so that you do not become dehydrated (lack of water in the body from losing too much fluid).
- If you have diarrhea, eat low-fiber foods that are high in protein and calories and avoid foods that can irritate your digestive tracts or lead to cramping.
- If you are not able to move your bowels, check with your doctor or nurse before you use enemas, laxatives, or suppositories.
- Ask your nurse or doctor about medicine that can lessen or stop your diarrhea and/or constipation.
- To help with nausea and vomiting, eat small, frequent meals instead of three large meals a day. Choose foods and drinks that are at room temperature. Ask your nurse or doctor about other helpful tips and medicine that is available to help stop or lessen these symptoms.
- Keeping your pain under control is important to your well-being. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you are experiencing pain.
- If you get a rash do not put anything on it unless your doctor or nurse says you may. Keep the area around the rash clean and dry. Ask your doctor for medicine if your rash bothers you.

Food and Drug Interactions

- Avoid grapefruit products, Seville oranges, and starfruit while taking this medicine. These foods may raise the levels of venetoclax in your body which could make side effects worse.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist about all other prescription medicines and over-the-counter medicines and dietary supplements (vitamins, minerals, herbs, and others) you are taking before starting this medicine as there are known drug interactions with venetoclax. Also, check with your doctor or pharmacist before starting any new prescription or over-the-counter medicines, or dietary supplements to make sure that there are no interactions.
- This drug may interact with St. John's Wort and may lower the levels of the drug in your body, which can make it less effective.
- There are known interactions of venetoclax with blood thinning medicine such as warfarin. Ask your doctor what precautions you should take.

When to Call the Doctor

Call your doctor or nurse if you have any of these symptoms and/or any new or unusual symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4° F (38° C) or higher



- Chills
- Tiredness and/or extreme weakness that interferes with your daily activities
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Feeling that your heart is beating a fast or in a not normal way (palpitations)
- Fast breathing
- Cough that is bothersome
- Coughing up yellow, green, or bloody mucus
- Wheezing and/or trouble breathing
- Pain in your mouth or throat that makes it hard to eat or drink
- Nausea that stops you from eating or drinking and/or is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Throwing up more than 3 times a day
- Diarrhea, 4 times in one day or diarrhea with lack of strength or a feeling of being dizzy
- No bowel movement in 3 days or when you feel uncomfortable
- Pain in your abdomen that does not go away
- Signs of infection: fever or chills, cough, trouble breathing, severe pain in your abdomen, difficulty urinating, burning or pain when you pass urine, redness and/or swelling of the skin
- Signs of tumor lysis: confusion or agitation, decreased urine, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, muscle cramping, numbness and/or tingling, seizures
- Signs of abnormal bleeding such as coughing up blood, throwing up blood (may look like coffee grounds), easy bleeding or bruising, red or black tarry bowel movements, abnormally heavy menstrual flow, nosebleeds, or any other unusual bleeding
- Swelling of the hands, feet, or any other part of the body
- Weight gain of 5 pounds in one week (fluid retention)
- Pain that does not go away or is not relieved by prescribed medicine
- New rash and/or itching
- Rash that is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- If you think you may be pregnant

Reproduction Warnings

- **Pregnancy warning:** This drug can have harmful effects on the unborn baby. Women of childbearing potential should use effective methods of birth control during your cancer treatment and for 30 days after stopping treatment. Let your doctor know right away if you think you may be pregnant.
- **Breastfeeding warning:** It is not known if this drug passes into breast milk. For this reason, women should not breastfeed during treatment and for 1 week after stopping treatment because this drug could enter the breast milk and cause harm to a breastfeeding baby.
- **Fertility warning:** In men, this drug may affect your ability to have children in the future. Talk with your doctor or nurse if you plan to have children. Ask for information on sperm banking.

Revised December 2022

