

Osimertinib (Tagrisso®)

Osimertinib is a type of anti-cancer treatment called a targeted therapy. The aim of this treatment is to control the cancer and its symptoms. Your doctor or nurse will be happy to answer any questions you may have about your treatment.

You may find it useful to refer to the booklet 'Chemotherapy - a guide' which gives general information on staying well during anti-cancer treatments.

Your treatment

Your doctor has prescribed you an anti-cancer treatment called osimertinib, which is a tablet and is taken by mouth.

The usual dose is 80 milligrams (1 tablet) taken once a day at about the same time each day, with or without food. The tablet should be swallowed whole with water, do not crush, split or chew the tablet.

If you miss a dose by more than 12 hours do not take that dose and continue the medication as prescribed the following day. Your medical team may reduce this dose if you experience severe side effects.

Osimertinib should not be taken with grapefruit juice. Please tell your doctor or nurse about any other medication you are taking as some other medications such as St John's Wort can reduce the effectiveness of osimertinib.

While you are taking osimertinib we will review you in clinic on a regular basis. This will be every 4 weeks, at the beginning of a new cycle of treatment. An extra visit after 2 weeks may be required during the first cycle. You will also have a routine blood test before the start of each cycle of treatment. A chest X-ray and other tests such as CT scans will also be performed at regular intervals.

We strongly advise current smokers to stop smoking while taking this treatment. This is because smoking may reduce the effectiveness of treatment. If you would like help with stopping smoking please let your doctor or nurse know and they can arrange support for you.

This treatment can have serious or possibly life-threatening side effects. It is very important that you report side effects straight away. Don't delay, if you feel unwell, please ring The Christie Hotline on **0161 446 3658**. The lines are open 24 hours a day.



Flu vaccinations

Is it alright for me to have a flu jab during the time I'm having chemotherapy?

It's safe to have a flu jab, but depending on the sort of chemotherapy you have had, it may not give quite as much protection against infection as usual. Some patients may need 2 vaccinations. However, if you're thinking of having any other vaccinations, do check with your Christie doctor first, because some vaccines should be avoided.

COVID-19 vaccinations

We advise that all patients receive a COVID-19 vaccination when this is offered. Your doctor will discuss with you the best time to have this.

Possible side effects

This treatment can cause many different side effects. Some are more likely to occur than others. Everyone is different and not everyone gets all the side effects. Most side effects are usually temporary, but in some rare cases they can be life-threatening. It is important to tell your hospital doctor or nurse about any side effects so they can be monitored and, where possible, treated.

Common side effects (may affect more than 1 in 10)

• Lethargy

You may feel tired and lacking in energy. It can be frustrating when you feel unable to cope with routine tasks. If you do feel tired, take rest and get help with household chores. If necessary, take time off work. Gentle exercise such as a daily walk can be beneficial.

• Decreased appetite

You may lose your appetite and find eating large meals more difficult. It is best to try to eat smaller portions but to carry on trying to eat something even if you do not feel very hungry. Ask your nurse or doctor for advice on what to eat if this is causing you problems or you have unexpected weight loss.

• Stomatitis (sore mouth)

Your mouth and/or lips may become painful and more red than usual. It is usually mild and manageable by avoiding alcohol, hot and acidic beverages/food. If it becomes a problem you may use pain relief medication and contact your GP or this hospital.

• Diarrhoea

It is usually mild and if this becomes a problem while you are having treatment, anti-diarrhoea tablets can be bought from a pharmacy or prescribed by your GP for a temporary period until this is resolved.

If you develop severe diarrhoea it is important to contact this hospital straightaway, as this may also be a sign of a serious infection. Don't delay!

• Constipation

This occasionally occurs in the long-term. Try to drink plenty of fluids and eat foods high in fibre. Tell your doctor who may prescribe a suitable laxative. Ask the staff for a copy of 'Eating - help yourself' which has useful ideas about diet when you are having treatment.

• Skin rash, dryness and itchiness

You may develop a skin rash or dry skin. It is most common on the face, neck, chest, and back. This is usually mild and easily treated but it may also become painful and itchy. If it becomes a problem please call this hospital. It is usually managed with creams. Sometimes the treatment dose may need to be reduced or delayed. If you develop any signs of infection then the medical team will start a course of antibiotics.

• Nail defects (paronychia)

You may experience an infection of the skin around your fingernails and/or toenails. It usually evolves slowly but we may need to treat the infection to prevent changes in the nail shape, colour, texture or even nail loss.

• Low blood counts

While having this treatment there may be a reduction of your blood cell counts. If your red cell count drops you may become anaemic and therefore feel tired. If your white cell count drops you have an increased risk of infections. If your platelet count drops you have an increased risk for bleeding and bruising. Your blood counts will be checked regularly and any abnormality should be detected before you develop any symptoms. Nonetheless you should let your doctor or nurse know if these symptoms occur.

Uncommon side effects (less than 1 in 10)

• Shortness of breath

This treatment can cause inflammation of the tissue in your lungs (interstitial pneumonitis). Symptoms of this include a cough that will not settle, fever or breathing difficulties. Another possible complication is a blood clot in your lungs (thromboembolism) which may cause sudden breathing difficulties.

If you develop any severe shortness of breath it is important to contact this hospital straight away as this may be serious. Don't delay!

• Cardiac abnormalities (Warning!)

Sometimes osimertinib can cause changes in the usual electrical activity of the heart as seen on an ECG (electrocardiogram). If you experience chest pain, dizziness, fainting, or any loss of consciousness you must inform your medical team or nurse. It is important not to drive or operate machinery if these symptoms occur. In an emergency you should go immediately to your nearest accident and emergency department.

Rare side effects (less than 1 in 100)

• Increased risk of infection

It is uncommon to develop an infection. Symptoms of infection include fever, shivering, sweats, sore throat, diarrhoea, discomfort when you pass urine, cough or breathlessness. We recommend that you use a digital thermometer so you can check your temperature. You can buy one from your local chemist.

If you feel unwell, you have symptoms of an infection or your temperature is 37.5°C or above, or below 36°C contact The Christie Hotline straight away.

• Electrolyte imbalance

We may also detect in your routine blood tests a decrease in your sodium or magnesium level. It is unlikely you'll experience any symptoms with a mild decrease. If needed, we may start you on replacement tablets for a period of time.

Serious and potentially life threatening side effects

In a small proportion of patients this treatment can result in very severe side effects, which may cause life-threatening complications. The team caring for you will discuss the risk of these side effects with you.

Sex, contraception and fertility

Protecting your partner and contraception

We recommend that you or your partner use a condom during sexual intercourse, while you are on this treatment. Women should also use effective contraception for 2 months after finishing treatment, and men for 4 months. This treatment is dangerous to unborn babies and this will also protect you and your partner from any drugs that may be present in semen and in the vagina. If you suspect that you may be pregnant please tell your doctor immediately.

Fertility: This treatment may affect your ability to have children. Your doctor or nurse should have discussed this with you. If not, please ask them before you start treatment.

You should not take osimertinib if you are pregnant.

Late side effects

Some side effects may become evident only after a number of years. In reaching any decision with you about treatment, the potential benefit you receive from treatment will be weighed against the risks of serious long-term side effects to the heart, lungs, kidneys and bone marrow. With some drugs there is also a small but definite risk of developing another cancer. If any of these problems specifically applies to you, the doctor will discuss these with you and note this on your consent form.

Contacts

If you have any general questions or concerns about your treatment, please ring the area where you are having treatment:

Administration enquiries - **0161 918 7606/7610**

Chemotherapy nurse - **0161 918 7171**

Clinical trials unit - **0161 918 7663**

Lung specialist nurse team - **0161 918 2595**

Your doctor's secretary**0161 446**.....

For urgent advice ring The Christie Hotline on **0161 446 3658** (24 hours)

Your consultant is:

Your hospital number is:

Your key worker is:

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If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

The Christie is committed to producing high quality, evidence based information for patients. Our patient information adheres to the principles and quality statements of the Information Standard. If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact **the-christie.patient.information@nhs.net**

For information and advice visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham, Salford or Macclesfield. Opening times can vary, please check before making a special journey.



Contact The Christie Hotline for
urgent support and specialist advice
The Christie Hotline: 0161 446 3658
Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week