Erlotinib

for Lungcancer

Regimen schedule

Day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Erlotinib	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Day	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Erlotinib	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

About your treatment

Erlotinib (Tarceva) blocks proteins that regulate the growth and division of cancer cells, slowing it down.

You take tablets once a day without interruption. During treatment, your blood tests and any side effects will be monitored.

How to take the medicines

Swallow the tablets whole with water. Do not take the tablets with food. Allow at least 2 hours after a meal before taking the tablets, and do not eat anything for at least 1 hour after taking the tablets.

If you smoke, you should stop, as smoking reduces the effect of the medicine.

Read more in the package leaflet.

Side effects - symptoms and tips

The side effects we list here are the most common and important. They can vary greatly from person to person, and even from time to time. Side effects may determine your dose or require you to stop taking the medicine.

Tell your doctor or nurse if you have any side effects. Often the symptoms can be prevented or alleviated.

Fatigue

Fatigue is common in connection with cancer and its treatment. The severity of the symptoms and their duration vary from person to person. You may continue to feel tired long after treatment has ended. This type of extreme exhaustion is known as fatigue—a tiredness that does not always improve with rest or sleep. Many describe fatigue as a total lack of energy, and it can occur even without physical exertion. Your ability to remember, concentrate, and solve problems may be impaired. Fatigue is sometimes associated with feelings of resignation, stress, anxiety, and depression. Tip: Try to stay active. Physical activity often helps alleviate tiredness and fatigue. Find a balance between activity, rest, and sleep that works for you.

Acne-like skin problems

You may get acne-like rashes on your face and upper body. You may also experience itching, cracking of the skin and inflammation around the nails. Talk to your nurse if you develop skin problems - you may need medication.

Tip: Apply a moisturising cream to your whole body several times a day. Use bath oil instead of soap. Avoid sunbathing. Wear a hat and full-coverage clothing. Lubricate parts of the body not covered by clothing with sunscreen that has a high SPF and UVA protection.

Problems with stomach and intestines

Diarrhoea is quite common.

Tip: Drink a lot, a few glasses more than usual per day. If you have diarrhoea, avoid fatty, spicy and high-fibre foods. Talk to your doctor if you get diarrhoea - you may need medication.

Nausea and taste changes

There is a risk that the treatment will make you feel unwell. If necessary, you will be given anti-nausea medication.

Tips: Sometimes it feels better to eat lighter food and small portions. For example, try skim milk, yoghurt, omelettes, sandwiches and hot or cold soups. Drinking a little extra between meals can reduce nausea.

Eye problems

You may get red eyes with stinging and pain. You may also experience blurred vision, dry eyes and become more sensitive to light.

Tip: If your eyes sting and feel dry, use lubricating eye drops available from pharmacies.

Contact your clinic immediately at:

Acute

Call 112 in case of persistent acute chest pain, pressure on the chest or difficulty breathing/shortness of breath

Call your clinic immediately at:

Fever (temp above 38 degrees) or at a temperature below 36 degrees

Sudden deterioration regardless of symptoms

Severe diarrhea that does not decrease with stopping drugs

New severe fatigue and/or muscle weakness or involuntary muscle cramps

New skin rashes over large parts of the body

Painful skin redness/rash/nail changes

Liquifying rash with yellowish crusts

Painful or inflamed eyes, sensitivity to light, blurred vision or altered vision

Common advice

It is important not to get pregnant or make someone pregnant while you are being treated with cancer drugs, as the drugs can affect the foetus. Therefore, use safe contraceptives. Sometimes double protection is needed, as side effects such as diarrhoea or the direct effect of cancer drugs may mean that the contraceptive pill is not enough protection on its own.

General information about cancer

Useful information about cancer is available from both 1177 Vårdguiden and Cancerfonden:

www.1177.se

www.cancerfonden.se