



Imatinib Mesylate

(Gleevec[®])

What is Imatinib?

Imatinib is a drug used to treat certain types of leukemia and other types of cancer. It works by inhibiting an enzyme (tyrosine-kinase) that plays a key part in the production of new cancer cells and in the regulation of cell death. By inhibiting this enzyme, Imatinib causes cancer cell death.

How will I receive Imatinib?

Imatinib is a capsule that is taken orally usually once daily. The capsule should be taken with a meal and a large glass of water. Follow the directions on the prescription label. Do not take your medicine more often than directed. Do not stop taking except on your prescriber's advice. Imatinib capsules should be stored at room temperature and protected from light and moisture.

What are the common side effects?

Please see chapter 5, “Managing Symptoms at Home,” in the manual.

What You May Expect	What You Should Do
<p>Decreased blood counts (lowered platelets, red and white blood cells) may occur. You may feel weak and tired. You may develop infections more easily and may bruise more easily.</p> <p>Your health care providers will test your blood frequently to monitor your blood counts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Report any signs of infection, fever, and unusual bleeding or bruising.

<p>Fluid retention and swelling may occur. The swelling most commonly occurs around the eyes, in the face, arms or legs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weigh yourself regularly and check for signs of swelling.• Contact your doctor or nurse if this occurs, as there are other medications that may be used to treat this side effect.
<p>Nausea and vomiting may occur while you are taking Imatinib.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You may be given a prescription for an antinausea drug(s) to take at home. It is easier to prevent nausea than treat it once it has occurred, so follow directions closely.• Drink plenty of liquids.• Eat and drink often in small amounts.

These are the most common side effects. Others may occur. Please report any problems to your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse.

Call and Seek Help Immediately If You Have:

- Signs of an infection such as fever, chills, cough, pain or burning when you urinate.
- Signs of uncontrolled bleeding such as black tarry stools, blood in the urine, or severe bruising.

Contact Your Nurse or Doctor If You Have:

- Signs of heart problems such as shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, swelling of feet or lower legs.
- Yellowish skin or eyes.
- Uncontrolled nausea or vomiting.
- Skin rash.

Special Instructions

Please report to your doctor if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. Use an effective method of birth control while taking Imatinib, as it may harm a developing fetus. Be sure to inform you doctor if you have a history of liver or heart disease.

Questions?

Call _____

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC Clinic staff are also available to help at any time.

Drug-Drug Interactions

There are many medications which may interact with Imatinib. Some of these medications are: carbamazepine (Tegretol[®]), phenytoin (Dilantin[®]), warfarin (Coumadin[®]), clarithromycin (Biaxin[®]), ketoconazole (Nizoral[®]), itraconazole (Sporanox[®]), cyclosporine (Neoral, Sandimmune[®]), simvastatin (Zocor[®]), and the herbal medication St. John's Wort. Tell your doctor if you are taking these or any other drugs as you may need extra blood tests or your dose may need to be changed. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start taking any new drugs.

Drug-Food Interactions

None known at this time.

For more complete information, please request an additional teaching sheet from the National Library of Medicine at www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginformation.html, your nurse, pharmacist, or visit the Resource Center.

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