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Afatinib: Patient drug information

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(For additional information [see "Afatinib: Drug information"](#))

Brand Names: US Gilotrif

Brand Names: Canada Giotrif

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat lung cancer.

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

- If you have an allergy to afatinib or any other part of this drug.
- If you are allergic to any drugs like this one, any other drugs, foods, or other substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had, like rash; hives; itching; shortness of breath; wheezing; cough; swelling of face, lips, tongue, or throat; or any other signs.
- If you are breast-feeding. Do not breast-feed while you take this drug and for 2 weeks after your last dose.

This drug may interact with other drugs or health problems.

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

What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- If you have upset stomach, throwing up, loose stools (diarrhea), or are not hungry, talk with your doctor. There may be ways to lower these side effects.
- If you get diarrhea, you will need to make sure to avoid getting dehydrated. Drink plenty of fluids and watch for weight loss. Talk with your doctor.

- You may get sunburned more easily. Avoid sun, sunlamps, and tanning beds. Use sunscreen and wear clothing and eyewear that protects you from the sun.
- Very bad and sometimes deadly skin rashes have happened with this drug. Talk to your doctor about any skin changes you may have.
- This drug may affect fertility. Fertility problems may lead to not being able to get pregnant or father a child. Talk with the doctor.
- This drug may cause harm to the unborn baby if you take it while you are pregnant.
- Use birth control that you can trust to prevent pregnancy while taking this drug and for at least 2 weeks after stopping the drug.
- If you get pregnant while taking this drug or within 2 weeks after your last dose, call your doctor right away.

What are some side effects that I need to call my 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 doctor or get medical help right away if you have 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 or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Signs of kidney problems like unable to pass urine, change in how much urine is passed, blood in the urine, or a big weight gain.
- Shortness of breath, a big weight gain, or swelling in the arms or legs.
- Feeling tired or weak.
- A heartbeat that does not feel normal.
- Change in eyesight, eye pain, or very bad eye irritation.
- If bright lights bother your eyes.
- Pain when passing urine.
- Redness or irritation of the palms of hands or soles of feet.
- It is common to have loose stools (diarrhea) when taking this drug. Some cases of loose stools may cause fluid loss and kidney problems that can sometimes be deadly. Call your doctor right away if you have loose stools that do not go away or if you have very loose stools. Do not try to treat loose stools without first checking with your doctor.
- Very bad and sometimes deadly liver problems have happened with this drug. Call your doctor right away if you have 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.
- Very bad and sometimes deadly lung problems have happened with this drug. The chance may be raised in people who are of Asian descent. Call your doctor right away if you have new or worsening lung or breathing problems like trouble breathing, shortness of breath, cough, or fever.
- A very bad skin reaction (Stevens-Johnson syndrome/toxic epidermal necrolysis) may happen. It can cause very bad health problems that may not go away, and sometimes death. Get medical help right away if you have signs like red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin (with or without fever); red or irritated eyes; or sores in your mouth, throat, nose, or eyes.

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 doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

- Itching.
- Dry skin.
- Dry lips.
- Pimples (acne).
- Loose stools (diarrhea).
- Not hungry.
- Mouth irritation or mouth sores.
- Nosebleed.
- Runny nose.
- Weight loss.
- Change in skin or finger nails.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.

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

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

- Take on an empty stomach. Take 1 hour before or 2 hours after meals.
- Avoid wearing contacts unless told to wear them by your doctor.
- To gain the most benefit, do not miss doses.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Take a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is less than 12 hours until the next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

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

- Store in the original container at room temperature.
- Protect from light.
- 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.
- Check with your pharmacist about how to throw out unused drugs.

General drug facts

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else's drugs.
- Keep a list of all your drugs (prescription, natural products, vitamins, OTC) with you. Give this list to your doctor.
- Talk with the doctor before starting 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.

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