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Erlotinib: Patient drug information

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

Brand Names: US Tarceva

Brand Names: Canada Tarceva; Teva-Erlotinib

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat lung cancer.
- It is used to treat pancreatic cancer.

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

- If you have an allergy to erlotinib 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 being treated with a platinum-based chemo drug like cisplatin or carboplatin.
- If you are taking any of these drugs: Dexamethasone, esomeprazole, lansoprazole, omeprazole, pantoprazole, or rabeprazole.
- If you are breast-feeding. Do not breast-feed while you take this drug and for 2 weeks after your last dose.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

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.
- 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 have loose stools (diarrhea), talk with your doctor. Do not try to treat diarrhea without first checking with your doctor.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- Talk with your doctor before getting any vaccines. Use with this drug may either raise the chance of an infection or make the vaccine not work as well.
- Very bad and sometimes deadly bleeding can happen when warfarin is taken with this drug. If you are taking warfarin or another drug like warfarin, you may need to have your blood work checked more closely. Talk with your doctor.
- If you smoke, talk with your doctor.
- If you start or stop smoking, talk with your doctor. How much drug you take may need to be changed.
- If you drink grapefruit juice or eat grapefruit often, 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.
- Use an alcohol-free lotion or cream to help with pimple-like skin effects or dry skin.
- Very bad and sometimes deadly lung, liver, or kidney problems have happened with this drug. Talk with your doctor.
- Very bad and sometimes deadly holes in the GI (gastrointestinal) tract have happened with this drug. 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 1 month after stopping this drug.
- If you get pregnant while taking this drug or within 1 month 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 infection like fever, chills, very bad sore throat, ear or sinus pain, cough, more sputum or change in color of sputum, pain with passing urine, mouth sores, or wound that will not heal.
- 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.
- 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.
- Signs of lung or breathing problems like shortness of breath or other trouble breathing, cough, or fever.
- Weakness on 1 side of the body, trouble speaking or thinking, change in balance, drooping on one side of the face, or blurred eyesight.
- Chest pain or pressure.
- Very upset stomach or throwing up.

- Very loose stools (diarrhea).
- Any unexplained bruising or bleeding.
- Feeling very tired or weak.
- Change in eyesight.
- Eye irritation.
- Low mood (depression).
- Very bad belly pain.
- Throwing up blood or throw up that looks like coffee grounds.
- Black, tarry, or bloody stools.
- 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:

- Feeling tired or weak.
- Itching.
- Pimples (acne).
- Skin irritation.
- Upset stomach.
- Loose stools (diarrhea).
- Not hungry.
- Mouth irritation or mouth sores.
- Headache.
- Back pain.
- Muscle or joint pain.
- Change in hair or nails.
- Dry skin.

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.
- 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.
- Do not take cimetidine, famotidine, nizatidine, or ranitidine at the same time as this drug. Talk with your doctor.
- Do not take antacids at the same time as this drug. Ask your doctor if you have a question about how to take antacids with this drug.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Take a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your 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 at room temperature.
- 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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