



**BC Cancer Agency**  
CARE + RESEARCH  
An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority

**For the Patient: Ponatinib**  
Other names: **ICLUSIG®**

- **Ponatinib** (poe na' ti nib) is a drug that is used to treat some types of cancer. It is a tablet that you take by mouth. The tablet contains lactose.
- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or **allergic reaction** to ponatinib before taking ponatinib.
- **Blood tests** may be taken regularly during treatment. The dose and timing of your treatment may be changed based on the test results and/or other side effects.
- It is important to **take** ponatinib exactly as directed by your doctor. Make sure you understand the directions.
- You may **take** ponatinib with food or on an empty stomach.
- If you **miss a dose** of ponatinib, take it as soon as you can if it is within 12 hours of the missed dose. If it is more than 12 hours since your missed dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times.
- If you **vomit** the dose of ponatinib, do not take a second dose. Let your doctor know as a medication to prevent nausea may be required for future doses.
- Other drugs such as ketoconazole (NIZORAL®) and rifampin (RIFADIN®) may **interact** with ponatinib. 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 or stop taking any other drugs.
- **Avoid grapefruit and grapefruit juice** for the duration of your treatment, as these may interact with ponatinib.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of ponatinib.
- Ponatinib may cause **sterility** in men and women. If you plan to have children, discuss this with your doctor before being treated with ponatinib.
- Ponatinib may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use **birth control** while being treated with ponatinib. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breastfeed during treatment.
- **Store** ponatinib tablets out of the reach of children, at room temperature, away from heat, light, and moisture.

- **Tell** doctors, dentists, and other health professionals that you are being treated with ponatinib before you receive any treatment from them.
- If you are planning to have **surgery**, you should stop taking ponatinib 7 days prior to surgery. Do not restart ponatinib until the surgical wound is fully healed. This helps to lower the risk of bleeding and may prevent problems with wound healing after surgery.

### Changes in blood counts

Ponatinib may cause temporary changes in your blood counts. Your doctor will be following these changes carefully by performing blood tests. Adjustment of your treatment may be needed in certain circumstances.

BLOOD COUNTS	MANAGEMENT
Normal white blood cells protect your body by fighting bacteria (germs) that cause infection. <b>When they are low, you are at greater risk of having an infection.</b>	To help prevent infection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wash your hands often and always after using the bathroom.</li> <li>• Avoid crowds and people who are sick.</li> <li>• Call your doctor <b>immediately</b> at the first sign of an infection such as fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer), chills, cough, or burning when you pass urine.</li> </ul>
Normal platelets help your blood to clot normally after an injury (e.g., cut). <b>When the platelet count is low, you may be more likely to bruise or bleed.</b>	To help prevent bleeding problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try not to bruise, cut, or burn yourself.</li> <li>• Clean your nose by blowing gently. Do not pick your nose.</li> <li>• Avoid constipation.</li> <li>• Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush as your gums may bleed more easily.</li> </ul> Some medications such as ASA (e.g., ASPIRIN®) or ibuprofen (e.g., ADVIL®) may increase your risk of bleeding. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not stop taking any medication that has been prescribed by your doctor (e.g., <b>ASA for your heart</b>).</li> <li>• For minor pain, try acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) first.</li> </ul>

Side effects are listed in the following table in the order in which they may occur. Tips to help manage the side effects are included.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<b>Nausea</b> and <b>vomiting</b> may occur. Most people have little or no nausea.	<p>You may be given a prescription for antinausea drug(s) to take at home. <b>It is easier to prevent nausea than treat it once it has occurred</b>, so follow directions closely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids.</li> <li>• Eat and drink often in small amounts.</li> <li>• Try the ideas in <i>Food Choices to Help Control Nausea</i>.*</li> </ul>
<b>Skin rashes</b> or <b>dry skin</b> may sometimes occur.	<p>If very irritating, call your doctor. Otherwise, be sure to mention it at your next visit.</p>
<b>Fever</b> may sometimes occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take acetaminophen (e.g., <b>TYLENOL®</b>) every 4-6 hours, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day.</li> <li>• If you have fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer) <b>plus</b> another sign of infection, call your doctor <b>immediately</b>. Other signs of infection include chills, cough, or burning when you pass urine.</li> </ul>
<b>Diarrhea</b> may sometimes occur.	<p>If diarrhea is a problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids.</li> <li>• Eat and drink often in small amounts.</li> <li>• Avoid high fibre foods as outlined in <i>Food Ideas to Help Manage Diarrhea</i>.*</li> <li>• <b>Note:</b> If lactose in milk usually gives you diarrhea, the lactose in the tablet may be causing your diarrhea. Take <b>LACTAID®</b> tablets just before your ponatinib dose.</li> </ul>
<b>Constipation</b> may sometimes occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise if you can.</li> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids.</li> <li>• Try ideas in <i>Suggestions for Dealing with Constipation</i>.*</li> </ul>

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<b>Sore mouth</b> may sometimes occur. Mouth sores can occur on the tongue, the sides of the mouth, or in the throat. <b>Mouth sores or bleeding gums can lead to an infection.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brush your teeth gently after eating and at bedtime with a very soft toothbrush. If your gums bleed, use gauze instead of a brush. Use baking soda instead of toothpaste.</li> <li>• Make a mouthwash with ½ teaspoon baking soda or salt in 1 cup warm water and rinse several times a day.</li> <li>• Try the ideas in <i>Food Ideas to Try with a Sore Mouth</i>.*</li> </ul>
<b>Headache</b> may sometimes occur.	Take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours if needed, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day.
<b>Muscle, back, limb, or joint pain</b> may sometimes occur.	You may take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day for mild to moderate pain. Tell your doctor if the pain interferes with your activity.
<b>Sugar control</b> may sometimes be affected in diabetics.	Check your blood sugar regularly if you are diabetic.
<b>Swelling</b> of hands, feet, or lower legs may sometimes occur if your body retains extra fluid.	If swelling is a problem: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elevate your feet when sitting.</li> <li>• Avoid tight clothing.</li> </ul>
<b>Loss of appetite</b> and <b>weight loss</b> may sometimes occur.	Try the ideas in <i>Food Ideas to Help with Decreased Appetite</i> .*
<b>Tiredness</b> and lack of energy may sometimes occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired.</li> <li>• Try the ideas in <i>Your Bank to Energy Savings: Helping People with Cancer Handle Fatigue</i>.*</li> </ul>
<b>Hair loss</b> is rare with ponatinib. If you lose hair, it will grow back once you stop treatment with ponatinib. Colour and texture may change.	If hair loss is a problem, refer to <i>For the Patient: Hair Loss Due to Chemotherapy</i> .*
<b>Numbness or tingling of the fingers or toes</b> may sometimes occur. This will slowly return to normal once your treatments are over. This may take several months.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be careful when handling items that are sharp, hot, or cold.</li> <li>• Tell your doctor at your next visit, especially if you have trouble with buttons, writing, or picking up small objects.</li> </ul>

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<b>High blood pressure</b> may sometimes occur.	<p>Your blood pressure may be checked during your visits to your doctor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You may be asked to check your blood pressure frequently between visits.</li> <li>• Your doctor may give you medication if your blood pressure is high.</li> <li>• Tell your doctor if you are already on blood pressure medication. Your doctor may have to adjust your dose.</li> </ul>

**\*Please ask your chemotherapy nurse or pharmacist for a copy.**

**STOP TAKING PONATINIB AND SEE YOUR DOCTOR OR GET EMERGENCY HELP IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE:**

- Signs of a **stroke** such as sudden onset of severe headache, eyesight changes, slurred speech, loss of coordination, weakness or numbness in arm or leg.
- Signs of an **infection** such as fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer), shaking chills; severe sore throat, runny nose, productive cough (coughing up thick or green sputum); cloudy or foul smelling urine; painful, tender, or swollen red skin wounds or sores.
- Signs of **bleeding problems** such as black, tarry stools; blood in urine; pinpoint red spots on skin; extensive bruising.
- Signs of a **blood clot** such as tenderness or hardness over a vein, calf swelling and tenderness, sudden onset of cough, chest pain, or shortness of breath.
- Signs of **heart or lung problems** such as fast or uneven heartbeat, chest pain, chest pressure, shortness of breath or difficulty in breathing, swelling of feet or lower legs, or fainting.
- Sudden and severe **abdominal pain**.

**SEE YOUR DOCTOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (DURING OFFICE HOURS) IF YOU HAVE:**

- Signs of **anemia** such as unusual tiredness or weakness.
- Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-coloured stools.
- Signs of **kidney problems** such as lower back or side pain, swelling of feet or lower legs.
- Signs of **gout** such as joint pain.
- **Changes in eyesight** such as blurred vision, dry eyes, redness, or eye pain.

**CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CONTINUE OR BOTHER YOU:**

- Pain not controlled with acetaminophen (e.g., **TYLENOL®**).
- Easy bruising, minor bleeding, or nosebleeds.

