



Provincial Health Services Authority

For the Patient: Abemaciclib
Other names: VERZENIO®

- **Abemaciclib** (a bem” a sye’ klib) 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 abemaciclib before taking abemaciclib.
- **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** abemaciclib exactly as directed by your doctor. Make sure you understand the directions.
- You may **take** abemaciclib with food or on an empty stomach.
- If you **miss a dose** of abemaciclib, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times.
- If you **vomit** the dose of abemaciclib, do not take a second dose. Skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times. Let your doctor know as a medication to prevent nausea may be required for future doses.
- Other drugs such as clarithromycin (BIAXIN®) and rifampin (RIFADIN®) may **interact** with abemaciclib. 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 abemaciclib.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of abemaciclib.
- Abemaciclib may affect **fertility** in men. If you plan to have children, discuss this with your doctor before being treated with abemaciclib.
- Abemaciclib may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use **birth control** while being treated with abemaciclib and for at least 21 days after the last dose. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes

pregnant. Do not breastfeed during treatment and for at least 21 days after the last dose.

- **Store** abemaciclib 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 abemaciclib before you receive any treatment from them.

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
<p>Nausea and vomiting may occur while you are taking abemaciclib.</p>	<p>You may be given a prescription for antinausea drug(s) to take at home. It is easier to prevent nausea than treat it once it has occurred, so follow directions closely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink plenty of fluids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Try the ideas in <i>Practical Tips to Manage Nausea</i>.*
<p>Fever may sometimes occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day. • If you have fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer) plus another sign of infection, call your doctor immediately. Other signs of infection include chills, cough, or burning when you pass urine.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<p>Diarrhea commonly occurs.</p>	<p>Diarrhea must be treated immediately with loperamide 2 mg tablets (e.g., IMODIUM®):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take <i>TWO tablets</i> at the first sign of loose or more frequent stools than usual. • Then take <i>ONE tablet</i> with every loose stool, up to a maximum of eight tablets per day. Continue until diarrhea has stopped for 12 hours. • Always keep a supply of loperamide (e.g., have 48 tablets at home). You can buy loperamide at any pharmacy without a prescription. • To help diarrhea: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Drink plenty of fluids. ▪ Eat and drink often in small amounts. ▪ Avoid high fibre foods as outlined in <i>Food Choices to Help Manage Diarrhea</i>.* ▪ A dietitian can give you more suggestions for dealing with diarrhea. • If diarrhea does not improve 24 hours after starting loperamide or lasts more than 48 hours, call your doctor. • Note: If lactose in milk usually gives you diarrhea, the lactose in the tablet may be causing your diarrhea. Take LACTAID® tablets just before your abemaciclib dose.
<p>Constipation may sometimes occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise if you can. • Drink plenty of fluids. • Try ideas in <i>Food Choices to Manage Constipation</i>.*

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<p>Your white blood cells may decrease. White blood cells protect your body by fighting bacteria (germs) that cause infection. When they are low, you are at greater risk of having an infection.</p>	<p>To help prevent infection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash your hands often and always after using the bathroom. • Avoid crowds and people who are sick. • Stop taking abemaciclib and call your doctor immediately 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.
<p>Your platelets may decrease. Platelets help to make your blood clot when you hurt yourself. You may bruise or bleed more easily than usual.</p>	<p>To help prevent bleeding problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try not to bruise, cut, or burn yourself. • Clean your nose by blowing gently. Do not pick your nose. • Avoid constipation. • Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush as your gums may bleed more easily. Maintain good oral hygiene. <p>Some medications such as ASA (e.g., ASPIRIN®) or ibuprofen (e.g., ADVIL®) may increase your risk of bleeding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not stop taking any medication that has been prescribed by your doctor (e.g., ASA for your heart). • For minor pain, try acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) first, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day, but occasional use of ibuprofen may be acceptable.
<p>Tiredness and lack of energy commonly occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired. • Try the ideas in <i>Fatigue/Tiredness – Patient Handout</i>.*

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
<p>Sore mouth may sometimes occur. Mouth sores can occur on the tongue, the sides of the mouth, or in the throat. Mouth sores or bleeding gums can lead to an infection.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Make a mouthwash with ¼ teaspoon baking soda AND ¼ teaspoon salt in 1 cup warm water and rinse several times a day. • Try the ideas in <i>Food Ideas to Try with a Sore Mouth</i>.*
<p>Headache may sometimes occur.</p>	<p>Take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours if needed, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day.</p>
<p>Taste alteration may sometimes occur.</p>	<p>Try the ideas in <i>Food Ideas to Cope with Taste and Smell Changes</i>.*</p>
<p>Loss of appetite and weight loss sometimes occur.</p>	<p>Try the ideas in <i>Food Ideas to Help with Decreased Appetite</i>.*</p>
<p>Hair loss sometimes occurs with abemaciclib. Hair will grow back once you stop treatment with abemaciclib. Colour and texture may change.</p>	<p>If hair loss is a problem, refer to <i>Resources for Hair Loss and Appearance Changes – Patient Handout</i>.*</p>

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

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

- Signs of an **infection** such as fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer), shaking chills; severe sore throat, 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 **lung problems** such as new or worsening cough, chest pain, shortness of breath, or difficulty in breathing.
- Signs of **heart problems** such as fast or uneven heartbeat.

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.
- **Diarrhea** that does not improve with loperamide.

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

- Muscle or joint pain.
- Stomach pain.
- Changes in eyesight such as dry or watery eyes.
- Dry mouth.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Heartburn or indigestion.
- Cough and/or runny nose.
- Headache not controlled with acetaminophen (e.g., **TYLENOL®**).
- Skin rash or itching.
- Swelling of hands, feet or lower legs.
- Numbness or tingling in feet or hands.
- Dizziness.
- Anxiety (nervousness or worry) that is not usual for you.

REPORT ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS TO YOUR DOCTOR
