

## PHARMACY

Drug Information

### Afatinib Tablet



#### What is Afatinib?

- Afatinib is used to treat non-small cell lung cancer.

#### How is Afatinib Taken?

- Afatinib is usually taken orally once daily on an empty stomach, one hour before or three hours after food, at the same time each day.
- The tablet should be swallowed whole. Do not chew or crush the tablet. Inform your doctor or pharmacist if you have difficulty swallowing.
- If possible, handle the medication yourself. Otherwise your family member or caregiver can help to handle the medication. Wash hands before and after handling the medication.
- If you miss a dose of Afatinib, take it as soon as you remember. If the next scheduled dose is due within 8 hours, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times.
- If you vomit the dose of Afatinib, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times.

#### Can Afatinib be Taken With Other Medications?

- Please inform your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking other medications, including Traditional Chinese Medicines, Jamu medicines or supplements.

#### What are the Important Side Effects of Afatinib?

- Medications prescribed by your doctor should be beneficial for your condition even though they may result in some inevitable side effects.

Side Effect	Management
Acne-like rashes may appear on the body areas exposed to the sun after starting treatment and may go away completely when the treatment stops. Skin on the face may also become flaky and scaly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid direct sunlight and applying sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of at least 30 may help. Alternatively, wear a hat, long sleeves, and long pants outside on sunny days.</li> <li>• Applying moisturizers to dry areas may also help.</li> </ul>

Side Effect	Management
Diarrhoea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your doctor can prescribe medications to control diarrhoea. Take it at the first sign of diarrhea diarrhoea and continue till diarrhoea has stopped for 12 hours.</li> <li>Make sure you drink at least 2 litres (8 cups) of fluids every day when you have diarrhoea.</li> <li>Avoid milk or dairy products and/or high fibre food while you are having diarrhoea</li> <li>Please proceed to the A &amp; E department immediately if diarrhoea happens 4 to 6 times a day and/or if diarrhoea lasts more than 48 hours after taking the medication.</li> </ul>
Mouth ulcers can occur on the tongue, the sides of the mouth or in the throat and this can lead to an infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brush your teeth gently after eating and at bedtime with a soft toothbrush.</li> <li>Rinse and brush your dentures after eating and soak them in denture solution overnight.</li> <li>Rinsing your mouth regularly with an alcohol-free mouth gargle or salt water may help reduce chances of infection.</li> </ul>
Lung problems (Pneumonitis, inflammation of the lung)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please proceed to the A&amp;E department immediately if you experience difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, chest pain and/or new or worsening cough.</li> </ul>

Side Effect	Management
Nose bleed may occur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sit up straight and tip your head slightly forward. Tilting your head back may cause blood to run down your throat.</li> <li>Pinch your nostrils shut between your thumb and forefinger or apply firm pressure against the bleeding nostril for 10 full minutes. After 10 minutes, check to see if your nose is still bleeding. If it is, hold it for 10 more minutes.</li> <li>Do not blow your nose for at least 12 hours after the bleeding has stopped.</li> <li>Please proceed to the A&amp;E department immediately if a nosebleed lasts longer than 20 minutes.</li> </ul>
Nail changes, including loosening or loss of the nail, and swelling commonly occur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid injuring your nails or fingertips and avoid harsh soaps, detergents and nail products.</li> <li>Please inform your doctor if nail changes interfere with your activities or pain is intolerable.</li> </ul>
Changes in the way the liver works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please proceed to the A&amp;E department immediately if you experience any yellowing of eyes and skin, tea-coloured urine, or severe abdominal pain.</li> </ul>
Changes in eyesight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please inform your doctor if you experience eye pain, swelling, redness, blurred vision, or other changes.</li> </ul>

**If you develop rashes, facial swelling or shortness of breath after taking the medication, you could be allergic to the medication. Please seek medical attention immediately.**

## Are There any Special Precautions That I Need to Take?

- You must not become pregnant during treatment with Afatinib and must use an effective method of contraception. You should take appropriate contraceptive measures during and up to one month after stopping treatment. If pregnancy occurs during treatment, you must inform your doctor immediately.
- Afatinib may have an anti-fertility effect, which could be irreversible. You should discuss with your doctor regarding fertility preservation prior to starting treatment.
- You should not breastfeed during treatment.

## What Else can I do to Help my Condition?

- Exercise  
Light exercise is recommended as it helps to improve mobility, balance and even emotional well-being. Do avoid strenuous exercise, and rest when you are feeling tired.
- Stay positive  
Understand your condition and take an active role in managing it. Do not be afraid to talk about it with your doctor/ pharmacist/ family members. Repressed feelings can be harmful to your immediate well-being and long-term health.
- Adequate hydration  
Maintain adequate hydration with 2 to 3 litres (8 to 12 cups) of fluids per day unless informed by your doctor to restrict fluids. This will decrease your chances of being constipated and also prevent dehydration.
- Medical and dental treatment  
If you need to go into hospital for any reason other than cancer, always inform the doctors and nurses that you are receiving anti-cancer treatment.  
Talk to your cancer doctor if you think you need dental treatment.  
Always inform your dentist that you are receiving anti-cancer treatment.

## How do I Store Afatinib?

- Store your medication in a cool, dry place away from heat, moisture and direct sunlight.

**If you have any problem with your treatment, please contact your doctor, pharmacist or nurse clinician.**

**Please keep all medications out of reach of children.**

**You can also find useful information with regards to your medication on this website:**

<https://www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support>



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