

Crizotinib (Xalkori®)

Crizotinib is a type of anti-cancer treatment called a targeted therapy. The aim of this treatment is to control the cancer and its symptoms. Your doctor or nurse will be happy to answer any questions you have about your treatment.

You may find it useful to refer to the booklet 'Chemotherapy - a guide' which gives general information on staying well during anti-cancer treatments.

Your treatment

Your doctor has prescribed you an anti-cancer treatment called crizotinib (Xalkori®) which is a capsule and is taken by mouth.

The usual dose is 250 mg taken twice a day morning and afternoon/evening.

The capsule should be swallowed whole with water and can be taken with or without food. Do not crush, dissolve or open the capsules. Crizotinib should not be taken with grapefruit juice. If you forget to take a dose by more than 6 hours, **miss the dose**, then restart crizotinib when your next dose is due. This dose may be reduced by your medical team if you experience severe side effects.

Please tell your doctor or nurse about any other medication you are taking as some other medications can reduce the effectiveness of crizotinib.

While you are taking crizotinib we will review you in clinic on a regular basis. This will be every 2 weeks initially and then monthly follow-up.

We strongly advise current smokers to stop smoking while taking this treatment. If you would like help with stopping smoking please let your doctor or nurse know and they can arrange support for you.

You will have a routine blood test before the start of each cycle of treatment.

This treatment can have serious or possibly life-threatening side effects. It is very important that you report side effects straight away. Don't delay, if you feel unwell, please ring The Christie Hotline on **0161 446 3658**. The lines are open 24 hours a day.

Flu vaccinations

Is it alright for me to have a flu jab during the time I'm having chemotherapy?

It's safe to have a flu jab, but depending on the sort of chemotherapy you have had, it may not give quite as much protection against infection as usual. Some patients may need 2 vaccinations. However, if you're thinking of having any other vaccinations, do check with your Christie doctor first, because some vaccines should be avoided.



COVID-19 vaccinations

We advise that all patients receive a COVID-19 vaccination when this is offered. Your doctor will discuss with you the best time to have this.

Possible side effects

This treatment can cause many different side effects. Some are more likely to occur than others. Everyone is different and not everyone gets all the side effects. Most side effects are usually temporary, but in some rare cases they can be life-threatening. It is important to tell your hospital doctor or nurse about any side effects so they can be monitored and, where possible, treated.

Common side effects (more than 1 in 10)

- **Nausea and vomiting (sickness) (Warning!)**

The severity of this varies from person to person. Anti-sickness medication will be given along with your treatment if needed. If you continue to feel or be sick, contact your GP or this hospital.

- **Diarrhoea**

If this becomes a problem while you are having treatment, anti-diarrhoea tablets can be bought from a pharmacy or prescribed by your GP for a temporary period until this is resolved. If the problem persists contact The Christie. **If you develop severe diarrhoea it is important to contact The Christie straightaway as this may be a sign of a serious infection. Don't delay!**

- **Visual disturbances**

You may develop problems with your vision. These are often temporary difficulties adjusting to light and then dark surroundings or blurring of your vision. You may also experience 'flashing lights or floaters' in your visual field. These side effects are usually mild and can affect 6 out of 10 patients taking this medication, but the side effects usually improve over time. If these side effects worsen you need to inform your doctor or nurse. If your vision is affected you should not drive or operate machinery.

- **Liver function tests**

It is important to monitor how your liver function is working while you are having treatment. This is done by routine blood tests. It is important to drink plenty of fluids while taking this medication. Please inform your medical team or nurse straight away if you notice you have darker urine than usual or any yellowing of your skin or eyes.

- **Constipation**

This occasionally occurs in the long-term. Try to drink plenty of fluids and eat foods high in fibre. Tell your doctor who may prescribe a suitable laxative. Ask the staff for a copy of 'Eating: help yourself' which has useful ideas about diet when you are having treatment.

- **Leg swelling or oedema**

This is often mild and can be relieved by putting your feet up and resting for part of the day. If you notice the swelling is severe or causing discomfort then please inform your medical team or nurse.

- **Decreased appetite**

You may lose your appetite and find eating large meals more difficult. It is best to try to eat smaller portions but to carry on trying to eat something even if you do not feel very hungry. Ask your nurse or doctor for advice on what to eat if this is causing you problems or you have unexpected weight loss.

- **Lethargy**

Some treatment may make you feel tired and lacking in energy. It can be frustrating when you feel unable to cope with routine tasks. If you do feel tired, take rest and get help with household chores. If necessary, take time off work. Gentle exercise such as a daily walk can be beneficial.

- **Sore mouth**

Your mouth may become sore or dry, or you may notice small mouth ulcers during this treatment. Drinking plenty of fluids and cleaning your teeth regularly and gently with a soft toothbrush can help to reduce the risk of this happening. We can prescribe a mouthwash for you to use during treatment. You can dilute this with water if your mouth is sore. Ask your doctor or nurse for further advice. There is also general mouth care information in the chemotherapy booklet. If you continue to have a sore mouth, please contact The Christie Hotline on **0161 446 3658**. Inflammation of the food pipe (oesophagus) may also occur. This can cause pain or difficulty swallowing. Your team may be able to prescribe medications to help with this.

- **Cardiac abnormalities**

Sometimes crizotinib can cause patients to experience an irregular or abnormal heartbeat or changes in the usual electrical activity of the heart as seen on an ECG (electrocardiogram). If you experience dizziness or any loss of consciousness you must inform your medical team or nurse. It is important not to drive or operate machinery if these symptoms occur. The team may perform a regular ECG in clinic.

- **Anaemia (low number of red blood cells)**

While having this treatment you may become anaemic. This may make you feel tired and breathless. Let your doctor or nurse know if these symptoms are a problem. You may need a blood transfusion.

- **Strange taste**

Occasionally during treatment you may experience a strange taste, sometimes described as metallic or bitter. A strongly flavoured sweet or mint will help to disguise this.

- **Tingling and numbness in the fingers or toes**

This is usually only mild and temporary but may last for some time or become permanent. Please report these symptoms to your doctor on your next hospital visit.

- **Blood clots (Warning!)**

During treatment you are more at risk of blood clots in the legs (DVT) or lungs (PE). Occasionally these clots can be life-threatening. To help prevent clots, keep mobile and drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids.

Uncommon side effects (less than 1 in 10)

- **Skin rash**

You may develop a skin rash. This is usually mild and easily treated. It is most common on the face, neck, chest, and back. The rash tends to be mild. If the rash becomes red, painful, itchy or develops an 'acne-like' appearance please contact The Christie. Sometimes the dose may need to be changed or delayed for a week or two. If you develop any signs that the rash is infected then the medical team will start a course of antibiotics.

- **Chest pain (Warning!)**

If you experience chest pain or notice a change in your regular heart beat please tell your doctor or nurse. Please inform your doctor if you have ever been diagnosed with any type of heart disease especially an abnormal heart rhythm. Report any episodes of fast or irregular heartbeat, very slow heartbeat chest pain, light-headedness, dizziness, fainting, or shortness of breath to your doctor straight away. In an emergency you should go immediately to your nearest accident and emergency department.

- **Shortness of breath (pneumonitis) (Warning!)**

This treatment can cause inflammation of the tissue in your lungs. Symptoms of this include a cough that will not settle, fever or breathing difficulties. **If you develop severe shortness of breath it is important to contact The Hotline on 0161 446 3658 straight away as this may be serious. Don't delay!**

- **Kidney damage**

This treatment rarely causes long term damage to the kidneys. Your kidney function will be closely monitored by a blood test with each clinic visit. Occasionally patients on this treatment have developed kidney cysts which do not cause any discomfort and will be monitored by your doctor.

- **Low phosphate levels in the blood**

Crizotinib can cause a low level of phosphate in your blood. This can cause confusion and muscle weakness. If you experience these symptoms let your team know. This can usually be corrected with supplements.

Rare side effects (less than 1 in 100)

- **Increased risk of infection**

It is uncommon to develop an infection. Symptoms of infection include fever, shivering, sweats, sore throat, diarrhoea, discomfort when you pass urine, cough or breathlessness. We recommend that you use a digital thermometer so you can check your temperature. You can buy one from your local chemist.

If you feel unwell, you have symptoms of an infection or your temperature is 37.5°C or above, or below 36°C contact The Christie Hotline straight away.

- **Reduced testosterone levels in men**

Occasionally hormone levels of testosterone can be affected by crizotinib. Men who experience any unusual mood swings, loss of libido (sexual desire) or feel low in mood should let their medical team or nurse know and this can be investigated further.

Serious and potentially life threatening side effects

In a small proportion of patients this treatment can result in very severe side effects which may cause life threatening complications. The team caring for you will discuss the risk of these side effects with you.

Sex, contraception and fertility

Protecting your partner and contraception: We recommend that you or your partner use a condom during sexual intercourse, while you are on this treatment and for 90 days after finishing treatment. Crizotinib may affect how well hormonal contraceptives work. This treatment is dangerous to unborn babies and this will also protect you and your partner from any drugs that may be present in semen and in the vagina. If you suspect that you may be pregnant please tell your doctor immediately.

Fertility: This chemotherapy may affect your ability to have children. Your doctor or nurse should have discussed this with you. If not, please ask them before you start treatment. **You should not take crizotinib if you are pregnant.**

Late side effects

Some side effects may become evident only after a number of years. In reaching any decision with you about treatment, the potential benefit you receive from treatment will be weighed against the risks of serious long term side effects to the heart, lungs, kidneys and bone marrow. With some drugs there is also a small but definite risk of developing another cancer. If any of these problems specifically applies to you, the doctor will discuss these with you and note this on your consent form.

Contacts

If you have any general questions or concerns about your treatment, please ring:

Administration enquiries - **0161 918 7606/7610**

Chemotherapy nurse - **0161 918 7171**

Clinical trials unit - **0161 918 7663**

Lung cancer nurse team - **0161 918 2595**

For urgent advice ring The Christie Hotline on 0161 446 3658 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

Your doctor's secretary**0161**

Your consultant is:

Your hospital number is:

Your key worker is:

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If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

The Christie is committed to producing high quality, evidence based information for patients. Our patient information adheres to the principles and quality statements of the Information Standard. If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact **the-christie.patient.information@nhs.net**

For information and advice visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham, Salford or Macclesfield. Opening times can vary, please check before making a special journey.



Contact The Christie Hotline for
urgent support and specialist advice
The Christie Hotline: 0161 446 3658
Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week