

# ORAL CANCER TREATMENT EDUCATION



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## LENALIDOMIDE

### Name of your medication

Generic name — lenalidomide (leh-nuh-LIH-doh-mide)  
Brand name — Revlimid® (REV-lih-mid)

### Common uses

Lenalidomide is used to treat adult patients with certain types of blood cancers, including mantle cell lymphoma, multiple myeloma, myelodysplastic syndrome, previously treated follicular lymphoma, and previously treated marginal zone lymphoma. It may be used in combination with other medications.

Lenalidomide may also be used for other treatments.

### Dose and schedule

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Taking lenalidomide as instructed is important to allow your treatment to be as effective as possible, so here are some key points to remember.

- Your dose and schedule of lenalidomide will be determined by your overall health, diagnosis, and individual treatment needs.
- Lenalidomide is to be taken by mouth one time per day.
- Lenalidomide can be taken with or without food but at the same time each day.
- Lenalidomide should be taken whole and not opened, crushed, cut, or dissolved. If you are unable to swallow lenalidomide, talk to your care provider or pharmacist for possible options.
- If you miss a dose of lenalidomide:
  - **Do not** take the missed dose if it has been more than 12 hours since you should have taken it. Simply take the next dose at the regularly scheduled time.
  - **Do not** take two doses at one time.
  - Be sure to write down if you miss a dose and let your care provider know about any missed doses.

### Drug and food interactions

- Lenalidomide has many drug interactions. Inform your care providers of all prescription medications, over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and herbal products that you are taking.
- Talk with your care provider or pharmacist before taking new medications or supplements, or receiving any vaccines.

### Storage and handling

Handle lenalidomide with care. Just like when chemotherapy is given into the vein, this drug can be toxic, and exposure of the drug to others should be limited.

- Store lenalidomide at room temperature (68°F–77°F) in a dry location away from light.

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- ❑ Keep lenalidomide out of reach of children and pets.
- ❑ Leave lenalidomide in the provided packaging until it is ready to be taken.
- ❑ Whenever possible, give lenalidomide to yourself and follow the steps below. If a family member, friend, or caregiver needs to give lenalidomide to you, they also need to follow these steps:
  1. Wash hands with soap and water.
  2. Put on gloves to avoid touching the medication. (Gloves are not necessary if you give the drug to yourself.)
  3. Gently transfer the lenalidomide from its package to a small medicine or other disposable cup.
  4. Administer the medicine immediately by mouth with water.
  5. Remove gloves and do not use them for anything else.
  6. Throw gloves and medicine cup in household trash.
  7. Wash hands with soap and water.
- ❑ If a daily pill box or pill reminder will be used, contact your care team before using:
  - The person filling the box or reminder should wear gloves (gloves are not necessary if you are filling the box or reminder).
  - When empty, the box or reminder should be washed with soap and water before refilling. Be sure to wash hands with soap and water after the task is complete, whether or not gloves are worn
- ❑ If you have any unused lenalidomide, **do not** throw it in the trash and **do not** flush it down the sink or toilet. Talk to your care provider or pharmacist about proper disposal of lenalidomide.
- ❑ If you are traveling, put your lenalidomide's packaging in a sealed plastic bag. Ask your pharmacist if any additional travel precautions are needed.

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### Side Effects of Lenalidomide

Below are common side effects that have been known to happen in about one third or more of patients taking lenalidomide are listed on the left side of this table. You **MAY NOT** experience these side effects. Options to help manage any side effects that do occur are included on the right side of this table. These should be discussed with your care provider. If you experience any side effect you cannot manage or that is not listed here, contact your care provider.

Possible Side Effect	Management
<b>Decreased white blood cells (WBCs) and increased risk of infection</b>	<p>Your WBCs should be monitored by a simple blood test. When your WBCs are low, you are at a greater risk for having an infection. Take the following precautions to protect yourself from infection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wash your hands often, especially before eating and after using the bathroom.</li><li>• Avoid crowds and people with fevers, flu, or other infection.</li><li>• Bathe regularly to keep good personal hygiene.</li></ul> <p>Contact your care provider if you experience any signs or symptoms of an infection such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fever (temperature more than 100.4°F or 38°C)</li><li>• Chills</li><li>• Sore throat</li><li>• Burning with urination</li><li>• Unusual tiredness</li><li>• A sore that becomes red, is draining, or does not heal</li></ul> <p>Check with your care provider before taking any medicine for fever or chills.</p>

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Possible Side Effect	Management
<p><b>Decreased platelet count and increased risk of bleeding</b></p>	<p>Your platelets should be monitored by a simple blood test. When they are low, you may bruise or bleed more easily than usual.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use caution to avoid bruises, cuts, or burns.</li> <li>• Blow your nose gently, and do not pick your nose.</li> <li>• Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush, and maintain good oral hygiene.</li> <li>• When shaving, use an electronic razor instead of razor blades.</li> <li>• Use a nail file instead of nail clippers.</li> </ul> <p>Call your care provider if you have bleeding that won't stop. Examples include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A bloody nose that bleeds for more than five minutes despite pressure</li> <li>• A cut that continues to ooze despite pressure</li> <li>• Gums that bleed excessively when you floss or brush</li> </ul> <p>Seek medical help immediately if you experience any severe headaches, observe blood in your urine or stool, cough up blood, or experience prolonged and uncontrollable bleeding.</p> <p><b>You may need to take a break or “hold” your medication for medical or dental procedures. Talk to your care provider or dentist before any scheduled procedures.</b></p>
<p><b>Diarrhea (loose and/or urgent bowel movements)</b></p>	<p>Monitor how many bowel movements you have each day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink 8–10 glasses of water/fluid each day unless your care provider has instructed you to limit your fluid intake.</li> <li>• Eat small, frequent meals throughout the day rather than a few large meals.</li> <li>• Eat bland, low-fiber foods, such as bananas, applesauce, potatoes, chicken, rice, and toast.</li> <li>• Avoid high-fiber foods, such as raw vegetables, raw fruits, and whole grains.</li> <li>• Avoid foods that cause gas, such as broccoli and beans.</li> <li>• Avoid lactose-containing foods, such as yogurt and milk.</li> <li>• Avoid spicy, fried, and greasy foods.</li> </ul> <p>Contact your provider if any of the following occur:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of bowel movements you have in a day increases by four or more.</li> <li>• You feel dizzy or lightheaded.</li> </ul> <p>Your care provider may recommend an over-the-counter medication called loperamide (Imodium®) to help with your diarrhea, but talk to your care provider before starting this medication.</p>

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Possible Side Effect	Management
<p><b>Decreased hemoglobin, part of the red blood cells that carry iron and oxygen</b></p>	<p>Your hemoglobin should be monitored using a blood test. When your hemoglobin is low, you may notice that you get tired or fatigued more easily.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to get 7–8 hours of sleep per night.</li> <li>• Avoid operating heavy machinery if you feel too tired.</li> <li>• Find a balance between work and rest.</li> <li>• Stay as active as possible, but know that it is okay to rest as needed.</li> <li>• You might notice that you are more pale than usual.</li> </ul> <p>Let your healthcare provider know right away if you experience any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shortness of breath</li> <li>• Dizziness</li> <li>• Palpitations</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fatigue</b></p>	<p>You may be more tired than usual or have less energy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay as active as possible, but know it is okay to rest as needed.</li> <li>• Try to do some activity every day.</li> <li>• Plan your activities, and do them at a time of day when you feel a bit more energetic.</li> <li>• Avoid operating heavy machinery if you feel too tired.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Constipation</b></p>	<p>Monitor how many bowel movements you have each day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink 8–10 glasses of water or fluid each day unless your care provider has instructed you to limit your fluid intake.</li> <li>• Stay active and exercise, if possible.</li> <li>• Eat foods high in fiber like raw fruits and vegetables.</li> </ul> <p>Contact your care provider if you have not had a bowel movement in three or more days. Your care provider may recommend over-the-counter medications to help with your constipation. A daily stool softener such as docusate (Colace®) and/or laxative such as senna (Senakot®) may be helpful. If these do not help within 48 hours, tell your provider.</p>

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Possible Side Effect	Management
<p><b>Rash or itchy skin</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep your skin moisturized with creams and moisturizing lotions to decrease the risk of rash or itchiness, and wear loose fitting clothing.</li> <li>• Avoid using perfumes and cologne because these products may increase rash symptoms.</li> <li>• Avoid being in the heat for long periods of time.</li> <li>• Your provider may recommend an over-the-counter antihistamine or a topical cream.</li> </ul> <p>Sunlight can make symptoms worse.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid sun exposure as much as possible to decrease the risk of sunburn. The highest exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation occurs from 10 am–4 pm.</li> <li>• Wear long-sleeved clothing, with UV protection if possible.</li> <li>• Wear broad-brimmed hats.</li> <li>• Apply broad-spectrum sunscreen (UVA/UVB) with at least SPF 30 as often as directed on the bottle.</li> <li>• Use lip balm with at least SPF 30.</li> </ul> <p>If your rash or itching continues to worsen, contact your care provider.</p>
<p><b>Nausea or vomiting</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat and drink slowly.</li> <li>• Drink 8–10 glasses of water or fluid each day unless your care provider has instructed you to limit your fluid intake.</li> <li>• Eat small, frequent meals throughout the day rather than a few large meals.</li> <li>• Eat bland foods; avoid spicy, fried, and greasy foods.</li> <li>• Avoid vigorous exercise immediately after eating.</li> <li>• Don't lie down immediately after eating.</li> <li>• Avoid strong odors.</li> </ul> <p>Let your provider know if you experience nausea or vomiting. Your provider may prescribe medication that can help.</p>

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### Serious side effects of lenalidomide

- ❑ Secondary malignancy is the growth of a cancer months or years after treatment. This is a rare but possible side effect of treatment with lenalidomide.
- ❑ Lenalidomide may be harmful to your liver. Speak to your care provider to know when you need to have laboratory tests done to monitor your liver function. If you get this side effect, your doctor may change your dose or stop treatment for some time.
- ❑ Some patients taking lenalidomide have experienced tumor lysis syndrome when starting treatment. Your healthcare provider may do blood tests to check for this side effect.
- ❑ Severe allergic reactions are a rare but serious side effect of lenalidomide. Immediately seek medical attention if you notice difficulty breathing, swelling of the mouth or tongue, or a serious rash.
- ❑ Lenalidomide can increase your risk of having a blood clot. Seek immediate medical attention if you have sudden swelling in an arm or leg, have chest pain, or have trouble breathing.
- ❑ Lenalidomide can cause serious birth defects. Do not take lenalidomide if you are pregnant or think you might be pregnant.
- ❑ Lenalidomide can cause worsening of your tumor (tumor flare reaction). Speak to your care provider if you experience tender swollen lymph nodes, low grade fever, pain, or a rash.

If you experience ANY uncontrolled side effect, call your physician or healthcare center immediately:

**(INSTITUTIONAL CONTACT INFO)**

### Handling body fluids and waste

Since lenalidomide remains in your body for several days after it is taken, some of the drug may be present in urine, stool, sweat, or vomit. Once you have started to take lenalidomide, it is important to follow the instructions below every day for as long as your treatment lasts. This will keep yourself, loved ones, and the environment as safe as possible.

- ❑ Pregnant women should avoid touching anything that may be soiled with body fluids from the patient.
- ❑ Toilet and septic systems
  - You may use the same toilet, septic tank, and/or sewer that you usually use. If you have a low-flow toilet, close the lid and flush twice to ensure all waste has been discarded.
  - If the toilet or toilet seat becomes soiled with urine, stool, or vomit, clean the surfaces before other people use the toilet.
  - Wash hands with soap and water after using the toilet.
- ❑ If you need a bedpan, be sure your caregiver knows to wear gloves to assist with cleanup and to wash the bedpan with soap and water every day.
- ❑ If you do not have good control of bladder or bowels, use a disposable pad with a plastic back, a diaper, or a sheet to absorb body waste.
- ❑ Wash any skin that has been exposed to body waste or lenalidomide with soap and water.
- ❑ Linens or clothing that are soiled with body fluids or body waste should be washed separately from other linens and clothing. If you do not have a washer, place the soiled linens in a plastic bag until they can be washed.
- ❑ Wash hands with soap and water after touching linens or clothing that may be soiled with body fluids.

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### Pregnancy, sexual activity, and contraception

- ❑ Women should not become pregnant and men should not get a partner pregnant while taking lenalidomide, during any treatment breaks, and for at least 4 weeks after stopping this medication.
- ❑ Do not take lenalidomide if you are pregnant or think you might be pregnant. Lenalidomide can cause serious birth defects. If you think you might be pregnant, notify your care provider right away.
- ❑ Women of childbearing age and potential must have 2 negative pregnancy tests prior to starting lenalidomide and will need to repeat this test with each cycle or sooner.
- ❑ Women of childbearing age and potential should go without having sex or use 2 forms of birth control beginning 4 weeks before starting treatment with lenalidomide, during treatment, and for at least 4 weeks after stopping treatment.
- ❑ Males must always use a latex or synthetic condom during any sexual contact with females of reproductive potential while taking lenalidomide, during treatment breaks, and for up to 4 weeks after discontinuing lenalidomide, even if they have undergone a successful vasectomy.
- ❑ Do not donate sperm while taking lenalidomide, during treatment breaks, and for 4 weeks after stopping this medication.
- ❑ Do not breastfeed while taking lenalidomide and for 4 weeks after the last dose of lenalidomide.
- ❑ It is safe to hug and kiss, but the special precautions described above are required before sexual activity.

### Blood product donation

- ❑ It is recommended that you do not donate blood or blood products (such as platelets) while receiving lenalidomide and for at least four weeks after your last dose of lenalidomide.

### Obtaining medication

- ❑ Talk with your care provider about how to obtain your lenalidomide.
- ❑ Lenalidomide is available only through a Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (REMS) program, and prescribers, patients, and pharmacies must be certified with this REMS program.
- ❑ Only a 28-day supply of medication can be obtained from the pharmacy at one time, and this medication is not eligible for automatic refills.

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**(PHARMACY OR SPECIALTY PHARMACY CONTACT INFO)**



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## LENALIDOMIDE

### Additional resources

**Product website:** [www.revlimid.com](http://www.revlimid.com)

**Product prescribing information:** [https://packageinserts.bms.com/pi/pi\\_revlimid.pdf](https://packageinserts.bms.com/pi/pi_revlimid.pdf)

**Product resources:** <https://www.bmsaccesssupport.bmscustomerconnect.com>

**Updated — November 24, 2024**

### Additional instructions

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**Important notice:** The Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC), Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association (HOPA), National Community Oncology Dispensing Association, Inc. (NCODA), and Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) have collaborated in gathering information for and developing this patient education guide. This guide represents a brief summary of the medication derived from information provided by the drug manufacturer and other resources. This guide does not cover all existing information related to the possible uses, directions, doses, precautions, warnings, interactions, adverse effects, or risks associated with this medication and should not substitute for the advice of a qualified healthcare professional. Provision of this guide is for informational purposes only and does not constitute or imply endorsement, recommendation, or favoring of this medication by ACCC, HOPA, NCODA, or ONS, who assume no liability for and cannot ensure the accuracy of the information presented. The collaborators are not making any representations with respect to the medications whatsoever, and any and all decisions, with respect to such medications, are at the sole risk of the individual consuming the medication. All decisions related to taking this medication should be made with the guidance and under the direction of a qualified healthcare professional.

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