

# ORAL CANCER TREATMENT EDUCATION



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## RUXOLITINIB

### Name of your medication

Generic name — Ruxolitinib (RUK-soh-LI-ti-nib)  
Brand name — Jakafi® (JA-kah-fy)

### Common uses

Ruxolitinib is used to treat patients with myelofibrosis, polycythemia vera, and graft-versus-host disease.  
Ruxolitinib may also be used for other treatments.

### Dose and schedule

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

- Your dose may vary, but the usual dose of ruxolitinib is 5 milligrams (5 mg) to 25 milligrams (25 mg) to be taken by mouth at a scheduled time twice a day.
- Ruxolitinib can be taken with or without food but at the same time each day.
- Ruxolitinib should be taken whole and not crushed, cut, or dissolved. If you are unable to swallow ruxolitinib, talk to your care provider or pharmacist for possible options.
- If you miss a dose of ruxolitinib, **do not** take an extra dose or two doses at one time. Simply take your next dose at the regularly scheduled 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

- Ruxolitinib 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.

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### Storage and handling

Handle ruxolitinib 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 ruxolitinib at room temperature (68°F–77°F) in a dry location away from light.
- Keep ruxolitinib out of reach of children and pets.
- Leaving ruxolitinib in the original packaging is preferred.
- Whenever possible, give ruxolitinib to yourself and follow the steps below. If a family member, friend, or caregiver needs to give ruxolitinib to you, they may 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 ruxolitinib 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 ruxolitinib, **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 ruxolitinib.
- If you are traveling, put your ruxolitinib's packaging in a sealed plastic bag. Ask your pharmacist if any additional travel precautions are needed.

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## RUXOLITINIB

### Side Effects of Ruxolitinib

Below are common side effects that have been known to happen in about one third or more of patients taking ruxolitinib 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
<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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A bloody nose that bleeds for more than 5 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>Decreased hemoglobin, part of the red blood cells that carry iron and oxygen</b></p>	<p>Your hemoglobin should be monitored by a simple 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 care 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>

*Continued on the next page*

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Possible Side Effect	Management
<p><b>Changes in electrolytes and other laboratory values</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High cholesterol levels</li> </ul>	<p>Changes in some laboratory values may occur and should be monitored by a simple blood test.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You may not feel any symptoms if the changes are mild, and they usually are not a sign of a serious problem.</li> <li>• More severe changes may occur, which can be a sign of a serious problem.</li> </ul> <p>Notify your care provider if you have any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shortness of breath</li> <li>• Chest discomfort</li> <li>• Weakness or fatigue</li> <li>• New aches and pains</li> <li>• Headaches</li> <li>• Dizziness</li> <li>• Swelling in your legs or feet</li> <li>• Red- or brown-colored urine</li> </ul>
<p><b>Infection</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wash your hands often, especially before eating and after using the bathroom.</li> <li>• Avoid people with fevers, flu or other infections.</li> <li>• Maintain good personal hygiene.</li> <li>• Report symptoms of a respiratory infection like a cough, sneezing, runny nose, fever, and scratchy or sore throat to your provider.</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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Plan your activities, and do them at a time of day when you feel a bit more energetic.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Avoid operating heavy machinery if you feel too tired.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Cough or shortness of breath</b></p>	<p>A cough that does not produce any mucous or congestion relief (dry cough) may occur while taking this medication. If you experience any breathing problems or shortness of breath, notify your care provider immediately. This may be a serious side effect of the medication.</p>
<p><b>Changes in liver function</b></p>	<p>Your liver function will be checked periodically by a simple blood test. Contact your care provider if you notice any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yellowing of the skin or whites of your eyes</li> <li>• Dark or brown urine</li> <li>• Bleeding or bruising</li> </ul>

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### Serious side effects of ruxolitinib

- Some people who take ruxolitinib have developed non-melanoma skin cancers. Tell your healthcare provider if you develop any new or changing skin lesions during treatment.
- You may be at risk for developing a serious infection during treatment. Tell your provider if you have any symptoms of infection, including fever, chills, and aches. If you stop ruxolitinib and your symptoms get worse, notify your healthcare provider.
- Ruxolitinib can cause cardiotoxicity which is a condition when there is damage to your heart muscle. Seek medication attention right away if you have any chest pain or tightness.
- Ruxolitinib 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 trouble breathing.
- There is a small risk of developing a second cancer years or months after taking ruxolitinib. Talk to your provider about this risk.
- Ruxolitinib may cause symptom exacerbation if abruptly stopped. If stopping ruxolitinib is appropriate, check with your provider if you should taper down ruxolitinib slowly before stopping.

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

**(INSTITUTIONAL CONTACT INFO)**

### Handling body fluids and waste

Because ruxolitinib 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 ruxolitinib, 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 ruxolitinib 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 ruxolitinib. Men and women of childbearing age and potential should use effective contraception during therapy and for a minimum of 30 days after the last dose of ruxolitinib.
- Effective contraception could include 1 or more of the following: oral contraceptive, barrier methods, etc.
- Do not breastfeed while taking ruxolitinib and for 2 weeks after the last dose of ruxolitinib.
- Inform your care provider if you become pregnant.
- It is safe to hug and kiss. Special precautions may be needed for sexual activity while on ruxolitinib, and you are encouraged to ask your care provider.

### Obtaining medication

Talk with your care provider about the process for obtaining your ruxolitinib.

\_\_\_\_\_ (PHARMACY OR SPECIALTY PHARMACY CONTACT INFO)

### Additional resources

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

**Product prescribing information:** <https://www.jakafi.com/pdf/prescribing-information.pdf>

**Product resources:** <https://www.incytecares.com>

*Updated – February 2, 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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