

# ORAL CHEMOTHERAPY EDUCATION



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## VEMURAFENIB

### Name of your medication

Generic name — vemurafenib (VEH-myoo-RA-feh-nib)  
Brand name — Zelboraf® (ZEL-boh-raf)

### Common uses

Vemurafenib is used to treat patients with melanoma or Erdheim-Chester disease who have a *BRAF* V600E mutation.

Vemurafenib may also be used for other treatments.

### Dose and schedule

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Taking vemurafenib 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 vemurafenib is 960 milligrams (960 mg) to be taken by mouth at a scheduled time twice a day.
- Vemurafenib can be taken with or without food but at the same time each day.
- Vemurafenib should be taken whole and not crushed, cut, or dissolved. If you are unable to swallow vemurafenib, talk to your care provider or pharmacist for possible options.
- If you miss a dose of vemurafenib:
  - Take a missed dose only if it is more than four hours prior to your next dose. Then 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.
  - Do not take an additional dose if vomiting occurs after taking vemurafenib; instead, continue with the next scheduled dose.

### Drug and food interactions

- Vemurafenib has many drug interactions. Inform your care providers of all prescription medications, over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and herbal products that you are taking.
- Grapefruit or grapefruit juice may interact with vemurafenib. Avoid eating or drinking these during your treatment with vemurafenib.
- Talk with your care provider or pharmacist before taking new medications or supplements, or receiving any vaccines.

# ORAL CHEMOTHERAPY EDUCATION



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## VEMURAFENIB

### Storage and handling

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

# ORAL CHEMOTHERAPY EDUCATION



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## VEMURAFENIB

### Side Effects of Vemurafenib

Below are common side effects that have been known to happen in about one third or more of patients taking vemurafenib 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>Muscle or joint pain or weakness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep a diary of your pain, including a description of when and where the pain is occurring, what it feels like, and how long it lasts.</li> <li>• Stay as active as possible, but know that it is okay to rest as needed, too.</li> <li>• Tell your care provider if pain interferes with your activity.</li> </ul> <p>If the pain or weakness bothers you, ask your provider what you may use to help with this discomfort. Take only pain medication that has been prescribed or recommended by your care provider.</p>
<b>Hair loss (alopecia)</b>	<p>Your hair will grow back after treatment is over. Some people choose to wear scarves, caps, or wigs. A short haircut prior to treatment may help with stress of hair loss.</p>
<b>Fatigue</b>	<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>
<b>Rash or itchy skin</b>	<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> <li>• Sunlight can make symptoms worse.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 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><input type="checkbox"/> Wear long-sleeved clothing, with UV protection if possible.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Wear broad-brimmed hats.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Apply broad-spectrum sunscreen (UVA/UVB) with at least SPF 30 as often as directed on the bottle.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use lip balm with at least SPF 30.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>If your rash or itching continues to worsen, contact your care provider.</p>

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# ORAL CHEMOTHERAPY EDUCATION



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## VEMURAFENIB

Possible Side Effect	Management
<b>Nausea or vomiting</b>	<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>
<b>Sun sensitivity, sunburn easily</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid sun exposure as much as possible to decrease the risk of sunburn. The highest exposure to UV (ultraviolet) radiation occurs between the hours of 10 am and 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>
<b>Skin tags (papillomas)</b>	<p>Check your skin regularly for any new growths, moles, or warts. Tell your care provider about any changes in your skin.</p>
<b>Thickening of the skin (hyperkeratosis)</b>	<p>Ask your care provider for management strategies if this bothers you.</p>
<b>Diarrhea (loose and/or urgent bowel movements)</b>	<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 4 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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# ORAL CHEMOTHERAPY EDUCATION



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## VEMURAFENIB

Possible Side Effect	Management
<b>Increased blood pressure</b>	<p>Routinely take your blood pressure. Record your blood pressure in a journal/diary and report these to your physician. Contact your health care provider for high blood pressure or if symptoms such as the following occur:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Headache</li><li>• Dizziness</li><li>• Chest pain</li><li>• Shortness of breath</li><li>• Fluid retention, weight gain, or swelling</li></ul>

### Serious side effects of vemurafenib

- ❑ There is a small risk of developing a second cancer years or months after taking vemurafenib. Talk to your provider about this risk.
- ❑ Vemurafenib may increase your risk of new skin cancers. Check your skin and tell your care team right away about any skin changes like a new wart, sore, reddish bump that bleeds or does not heal, or change in size or color of a mole. You should perform skin self-exams prior to starting vemurafenib and for up to 6 months after you stop treatment.
- ❑ Vemurafenib may be harmful to your kidneys. Speak to your care team to know when you need to have blood tests to monitor your kidneys. Contact your care team if you notice swelling in your legs and feet or decreased amount of urination.
- ❑ Vemurafenib may cause a condition called QT or QTc prolongation, which is a heart rhythm that can cause fast, irregular heartbeats. These fast heartbeats may cause you to faint or have a seizure. In rare cases, this could be life-threatening. Tell your care team right away if you feel faint, lightheaded, dizzy, or if you feel your heart beating irregularly or fast, while taking vemurafenib.
- ❑ Vemurafenib may be harmful to your liver. Seek medical attention if you notice yellowing of the skin or whites of your eyes, dark or brown urine, bleeding, or bruising.
- ❑ Severe allergic reactions are a rare but serious side effect of vemurafenib. Immediately seek medical attention if you notice difficulty breathing, swelling of the mouth or tongue, or a serious rash.
- ❑ Vemurafenib may be harmful to your eyes. Call your care team if you have any issue with your vision, or if you have pain in your eyes.
- ❑ Vemurafenib may increase your risk of hardening or thickening of the tissue in the palms of the hands or soles of the feet. Contact your care team if you feel any unusual lumps on the hands or feet, or if you have difficulty extending your fingers or toes.
- ❑ Radiation recall is a redness that can occur at the site of prior radiation when certain medications like Vemurafenib are given. If you had prior radiation, radiation recall looks like a serious sunburn in the area where you received your radiation treatment. Stay out of the sun and avoid tanning beds. If you must be in the sun, wear protective clothing and sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher over your previously radiated skin. Talk to your care team about other ways to prevent or manage this side effect. Let your care team know if you develop a skin rash.
- ❑ Rarely, vemurafenib can cause severe skin reactions, including Stevens-Johnson syndrome and toxic epidermal necrolysis, which can be life-threatening. Seek emergency care if you have a severe rash or a rash on your mouth, eyes, or genitals.

# ORAL CHEMOTHERAPY EDUCATION



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

**(INSTITUTIONAL CONTACT INFO)**

### Handling body fluids and waste

Vemurafenib remains in your body for several days after it is taken, so some of the drug may be present in urine, stool, sweat, or vomit. Once you have started to take vemurafenib, 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 vemurafenib 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.

### Pregnancy, sexual activity, and contraception

- Women should not become pregnant and men should not get a partner pregnant while taking vemurafenib. Men and women of childbearing age and potential should use effective contraception during therapy and for a minimum of 2 weeks after the last dose of vemurafenib.
- Effective contraception could include 1 or more of the following: oral contraceptive, barrier methods, etc.
- Do not breastfeed while taking vemurafenib and for 2 weeks after the last dose of vemurafenib.
- Please 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 oral chemotherapy, and you are encouraged to ask your care provider.

# ORAL CHEMOTHERAPY EDUCATION



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## VEMURAFENIB

### Obtaining medication

Talk with your care provider about how to obtain your vemurafenib.

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

### Additional resources

**Product website:** <https://www.gene.com/patients/medicines/zelboraf>

**Product prescribing information:** [https://www.gene.com/download/pdf/zelboraf\\_prescribing.pdf](https://www.gene.com/download/pdf/zelboraf_prescribing.pdf)

**Product resources:** <https://www.genentech-access.com/hcp/brands/zelboraf/find-patient-assistance.html>

**Updated — October 23, 2023**

### 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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