

# Erlotinib

## ***Erlotinib***

100 mg and 150 mg Film-coated tablets

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## **What is in this leaflet**

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Please read this leaflet carefully before you start using Erlotinib.

This leaflet answers some common questions about Erlotinib. It does not contain all the available information. It does not take the place of talking to your doctor or pharmacist.

All medicines have risks and benefits. Your doctor has weighed the risks of you using Erlotinib against the benefits they expect it will have for you.

**If you have any concerns about using this medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.**

Keep this leaflet with the medicine. You may need to read it again.

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## **What Erlotinib is used for**

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Erlotinib is used for the treatment of non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC). It can be given before or after initial chemotherapy if your cancer has specific mutations in a protein called epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR). It can also be given later on when initial chemotherapy has not worked.

Erlotinib is also used in combination with gemcitabine for the treatment of pancreatic cancer.

Erlotinib belongs to a group of medicines called anti-neoplastic (or anti-cancer) agents which are used to treat cancer.

Erlotinib prevents the activity of the EGFR protein. This protein is known to be involved in the growth and spread of cancer cells.

Your doctor may have prescribed Erlotinib for another reason.

Ask your doctor if you have any questions about why Erlotinib has been prescribed for you.

Erlotinib is not addictive.

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This medicine is available only with a doctor's prescription.

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## **Before you use Erlotinib**

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### ***When you must not use it***

Do not use Erlotinib if:

- **You have had an allergic reaction to erlotinib or any ingredients listed at the end of this leaflet**

Some symptoms of an allergic reaction may include:

- shortness of breath
  - wheezing or difficulty breathing
  - swelling of the face, lips, tongue or other parts of the body
  - rash, itching or hives on the skin
- **The package is torn or shows signs of tampering**
  - **The expiry date printed on the pack has passed**

If you take this medicine after the expiry date has passed, it may not work as well.

If you are not sure whether you should be using Erlotinib, talk to your doctor.

### ***Use in children***

**Do not give Erlotinib to children.**

Safety and effectiveness in patients less than 18 years of age have not been established.

### ***Use in elderly***

Reduction in dose is not required for elderly patients.

### ***Before you start to use it***

Your doctor must know about all the following before you start to take Erlotinib.

Tell your doctor if:

- **You are pregnant or plan to become pregnant**

Erlotinib may be harmful to an unborn baby when taken by a pregnant woman. It is not recommended that you take Erlotinib while you are pregnant.

If you are a woman who could become pregnant use adequate contraception during treatment, and for at least 2 weeks after taking the last tablet.

If you become pregnant while you are being treated with Erlotinib, tell your doctor immediately.

- **You are breast-feeding or plan to breast-feed**

It is not known whether erlotinib passes into breast milk. It is not recommended that you breast-feed while taking Erlotinib and for at least 2 weeks after the final dose.

- **You have liver problems**

It is not known whether Erlotinib has a different effect if your liver is not functioning normally.

- **You have kidney problems**

- **You have a history of stomach ulcers or inflammation of the bowel wall**

- **You are allergic to any other medicines, foods, dyes or preservatives**

- **You cannot tolerate lactose**

If you have not told your doctor about any of the above, tell them before you start using Erlotinib.

### ***Taking other medicines***

Tell your doctor if you are taking any other medicines, including medicines that you buy without a prescription from your pharmacy, supermarket or health food shop. You should also tell any health professional who is prescribing a new medication for you that you are taking Erlotinib.

Some medicines may interfere with Erlotinib. These include:

- medicines used to treat heartburn, indigestion and ulcers, such as antacids, H<sub>2</sub> antagonists (e.g. ranitidine) and proton pump inhibitors (e.g. omeprazole)
- medicines used to treat HIV infection such as atazanavir, indinavir, ritonavir and saquinavir
- medicines used to treat epilepsy such as carbamazepine, phenobarbital (also known as phenobarbitone), phenytoin and midazolam

- medicines used to treat bacterial infections such as ciprofloxacin, clarithromycin, erythromycin, rifampicin and rifabutin
- corticosteroids, a group of medicines used to treat inflammation
- medicines used to treat fungal infections such as itraconazole, voriconazole and ketoconazole
- midazolam, a medicine used to cause drowsiness before an operation
- non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines (NSAIDs), medicines used to relieve pain, swelling and other symptoms of inflammation, including arthritis
- statins, a group of medicines used to lower cholesterol
- other medicines used to treat cancer

These medicines may be affected by Erlotinib, or may affect how well it works. You may need different amounts of your medicine, or you may need to take different medicines.

There are some medicines that may still be taken with Erlotinib but may require close supervision by your doctor. These medicines include:

- warfarin, a medicine used to prevent blood clots

Your doctor will need to regularly monitor you with blood tests.

Your doctor or pharmacist has more information on medicines to be careful with or avoid while taking Erlotinib.

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## How to use Erlotinib

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### ***How much to take***

**Take Erlotinib exactly as your doctor has prescribed.**

Your doctor will tell you how many Erlotinib tablets to take each day.

For non-small-cell lung cancer, the usual dose is one 150 mg tablet each day.

For pancreatic cancer, given in combination with gemcitabine, the usual dose is one 100 mg tablet each day.

### ***How to take it***

Swallow the tablets whole with a glass of water.

Do not chew the tablets.

### ***When to take it***

Take Erlotinib tablets:

- at least 1 hour before you eat or
- at least 2 hours after you have eaten

Do not take Erlotinib with food.

### ***How long to take it***

The duration of treatment with Erlotinib varies, depending on the nature of your illness and your individual response to the treatment.

Continue taking Erlotinib until your doctor tells you to stop.

### ***If you forget to take it***

Do not take an extra dose. Wait until the next dose and take your normal dose then.

Do not try to make up for the dose that you missed by taking more than one dose at a time.

If you are not sure what to do, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

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## **While you are using Erlotinib**

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### ***Things you must do***

Tell all doctors, dentists and pharmacists who are treating you that you are taking Erlotinib.

Tell your doctor if you become pregnant while taking Erlotinib.

Tell your doctor if, for any reason, you have not taken your medicine exactly as prescribed. Otherwise, your doctor may think that it was not effective and change your treatment unnecessarily.

Tell your doctor if you feel the tablets are not helping your condition.

Be sure to keep all of your appointments with your doctor so that your progress can be checked.

### ***Things you must not do***

Do not stop taking Erlotinib or change the dose without first checking with your doctor.

Do not let yourself run out of medicine over the weekend or on holidays.

Do not give Erlotinib to anyone else even if they have the same condition as you.

Do not take any other medicines whether they require a prescription or not without first telling your doctor or consulting with a pharmacist.

Smokers should stop smoking while taking Erlotinib as blood levels of Erlotinib may be reduced.

### ***Things to be careful of***

It is very unlikely that Erlotinib will affect your ability to drive or use machines.

Be careful driving or operating machinery until you know how Erlotinib affects you.

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## **In case of overdose**

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### ***If you take too much (overdose)***

Immediately telephone your doctor or the National Poisons Centre (telephone 0800 POISON or 0800 764 766), or go to accident and emergency at your nearest hospital, if you think that you or anyone else may have taken too much Erlotinib.

Do this even if there are no signs of discomfort or poisoning.

You may need urgent medical attention.

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## **Side Effects**

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Tell your doctor or pharmacist as soon as possible if you do not feel well while you are using Erlotinib.

Erlotinib helps people with non-small cell lung cancer and pancreatic cancer but it may have unwanted side effects.

All medicines can have side effects. Sometimes they are serious, most of the time they are not. You may need medical treatment if you get some of the adverse effects.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist to answer any questions you may have.

**Tell your doctor if you notice any of the following and they worry you:**

- rash

- diarrhoea - your doctor may need to treat you with a medicine for this (e.g. loperamide)
- tiredness
- loss of appetite
- weight loss
- difficulty in breathing
- cough
- infection
- nausea or vomiting
- dehydration - signs of dehydration include dry skin, dark coloured urine, thirst, weakness or fatigue and loss of appetite
- stomach pain or discomfort or belching after eating
- itching
- dry skin
- acne
- tear in the skin
- folliculitis (infection of the hair roots)
- unusual hair loss or thinning
- conjunctivitis, discharge with itching of the eyes and crusty eyelid or swollen runny eyes
- irritation or feeling of having something in the eye
- inflammation of the eye, including pain or redness, sensitivity to light or reduced vision
- nose bleeds
- nail bed infection or swelling around the nails
- headache
- fever

- rigors or shaking
- depression
- numbness or weakness of the arms and legs

These are the more common side effects of Erlotinib that you are likely to notice. Your doctor will tell you more about them. Your doctor may also recommend that you change the dose of Erlotinib that you are taking if you experience any of the above side effects.

**Tell your doctor immediately if you notice any of the following:**

- mouth irritation, sore mouth, mouth ulcers or cold sores
- persistent cough
- infection, fever, chills

These may be serious side-effects. Your doctor may interrupt your Erlotinib treatment.

**Tell your doctor immediately or go to Accident and Emergency at your nearest hospital if you notice any of the following:**

- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing with cough and/or fever.
- severe stomach pain or discomfort
- severe or persistent diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting or loss of appetite
- vomiting blood or material that looks like coffee grounds, bleeding from your back passage, black sticky bowel motions (stools), bloody diarrhoea
- tongue and/or facial swelling
- hives
- wheezing
- blisters on your skin, especially severe blisters and bleeding in the lips, eyes, mouth, nose and genitals
- painful red areas of skin, large blisters and/or peeling of layers of skin, accompanied by fever and chills, aching muscles and generally feeling unwell
- yellowing of the skin and eyes
- dark coloured urine



These may be very serious side effects. You may need urgent medical attention.

**Other adverse effects not listed above may also occur in some patients. Tell your doctor if you notice any other effects.**

Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you don't understand anything in this list.

Do not be alarmed by this list of possible adverse effects. You may not experience any of them.

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## After using Erlotinib

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### ***Storage***

**Keep your tablets in their container until it is time to take them.**

If you take the tablets out of their container they may not keep well.

**Keep Erlotinib in a cool dry place where the temperature stays below 30°C.**

**Do not store it, or any other medicine, in a bathroom or near a sink. Do not leave it in the car or on window sills.**

Heat and dampness can destroy some medicines.

**All medicines should be stored out of reach of children.**

### ***Disposal***

Return to a pharmacy any unused Erlotinib or any Erlotinib that is past its expiry date as shown on the dispensing label or on the packaging.

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## Product description

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### ***What it looks like***

Erlotinib 100 mg tablets are white to yellowish, round tablets with "100" engraved on one side.

Erlotinib 150 mg tablets are white to yellowish, round tablets with "150" engraved on one side.

Erlotinib comes in packs of 30 tablets.

### ***Ingredients***

Active ingredient:

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Erlotinib CMI 28-03-2023

Erlotinib (as erlotinib hydrochloride)

Inactive ingredients:

- lactose monohydrate
- microcrystalline cellulose (E460)
- sodium starch glycollate
- magnesium stearate (E470b)

The tablets have a film-coating which contains:

- poly(vinyl alcohol) (E1203)
- titanium dioxide (E171)
- macrogol 3350 (E1521)
- talc (E553b)
- methacrylic acid – ethyl acrylate copolymer
- sodium hydrogen carbonate

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## **Sponsor Details**

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Erlotinib is supplied in New Zealand by:

Alchemy Health Limited  
120 Ngapuhi Road  
Remuera  
Auckland 1050  
NEW ZEALAND

Medical enquires: 0508 ALCHEMY (0508 252436)

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## **Date of Preparation**

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This leaflet was prepared on 28 March 2023.