Alpelisib (Piqray)

Medication Teaching

The Center for Breast Cancer
Mass General Cancer Center
Topics to Discuss

• Reasons for taking alpelisib
• How does alpelisib work in the body?
• How to take this drug
• Storage, Handling, and Disposal
• Drug Interactions
• Sexuality and Birth Control on alpelisib
• Side Effects & How to Manage
• Supportive Care Resources
• Your Breast Cancer Team
• When to Call and Important Phone Numbers
Reasons for taking Alpelisib

- A personal history of hormone receptor positive, HER-2 negative advanced or metastatic PIK3CA mutated breast cancer.
- Most often given to post-menopausal females and males.
- Usually used after at least one other endocrine therapy has already been tried.
- Your treatment team will talk with you about how long you will need to take this therapy.
  - It is common to be on therapy for as long as it is working to control your cancer.
How does alpelisib work in the body?

• Alpelisib is a type of oral targeted cancer therapy known as a PIK3 inhibitor.
• It is usually given in combination with fulvestrant (Faslodex), an injection which lowers estrogen levels in the body.
• Alpelisib blocks the PIK3CA signaling pathway inside cancer cells that carry the PIK3CA mutation.
• This prevents the cells from growing, reproducing, and surviving, leading to tumor cell death.
How to take this drug

- Alpelisib should be taken once daily with food
- It is important to take it at the same time each day
- Swallow whole with water and do not break, chew, or crush your tablet
- If a dose is vomited, do not take another dose on that day

What if I miss a dose?
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember
- You can take the missed dose up to 9 hours after the time you usually take it
- If more than 9 hours have passed, skip the dose for that day and take the dose the next day at the usual time
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time to make up for the missed dose
Storage and Handling

- Keep this medicine in its original bottle or in a separate pill box. Do not mix other medicines into the same pill box.
- Store at room temperature in a dry location away from direct light.
- Keep out of reach from children and pets.
- Do not place the pill directly on the counter or surface.
- Wash your hands before and after handling.
- Keep your hands away from your face and eyes when handling your pills.
  - If someone else will be handling your alpelisib, have them wear gloves so they do not come into direct contact with the medicine.
Disposal of alpelisib

- If you have unused medication, do not throw it in the trash and do not flush it down the sink/toilet.
- You may dispose of this medicine by:
  1. Calling your city or county’s trash and recycling service for information on hazardous drug take-back programs in your community.
  2. Bringing unused medication to MGH and disposing in the blue drug take-back receptacles. One receptacle is located outside of the Main Lobby Yawkey elevators and another is near the retail pharmacy in the Wang building.
  3. Asking your treatment team or pharmacist for more information.
Drug interactions

• Some drugs or supplements should not be taken at the same time as other drugs because they can cause side effects or cause the drug to not work well. This is called a drug interaction.
• Be sure to tell your treatment team all of the medications and supplements you take on a regular basis.
• They will check to make sure that none of your other medications interfere with alpelisib.
Sexuality and Birth Control While on alpelisib

- It is fine to be sexually active while on alpelisib.
- **Alpelisib can harm a developing baby.** You should not get pregnant or get someone pregnant while taking alpelisib.
  - Use a reliable birth control during treatment and for at least 1 week after taking alpelisib
- **Alpelisib may** affect fertility in men and women.
  - Talk to your treatment team about your fertility and what you can do before starting the medication
Common Side Effects of Alpelisib

- Low blood counts
- Diarrhea
- High blood sugar
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Tiredness and weakness
- Mouth sores
- Weight loss
- Hair thinning or hair loss
- Rash
Managing Side Effects: Rash

- Contact your treatment team if you develop a rash on alpelisib.
- An antihistamine and topical steroid may be prescribed for a mild rash.
- If your rash is more pronounced (covers more than 30% of your body) steroids and/or holding the drug may be required.
Managing Side Effects: Diarrhea

• For mild diarrhea (less than 4 episodes per day) on alpelisib, over the counter anti-diarrheal medication may be used.
  • IMODIUM (Loperamide) – 2 tablets (4mg) with first loose stool, then 1 tablet (2mg) with each stool thereafter (do not take more than 16mg/day) for diarrhea

• Tell your treatment team if you develop severe or uncontrollable diarrhea (4 or more episodes per day). This can cause dehydration.
  • Prescription strength anti-diarrheal medication may be needed
  • IV fluids and/or holding alpelisib may also be required
Managing Side Effects: High Blood Sugar Levels (Hyperglycemia)

- Alpelisib can cause new or worsening high blood sugar.
- Your blood sugar levels will be closely monitored by your treatment team when you come into the clinic.
- You may be asked to check your blood sugar at home as well. Your treatment team will tell you if this necessary.
- Some patients need to start medication, such as metformin, to help lower their blood sugar while on alpelisib. Your treatment team will let you know if this is the case for you.
- Consuming a diet low in carbohydrates is helpful to control high blood sugar while on alpelisib.
Supportive Care Resources

- Yoga
- Acupuncture / Acupressure
- Massage
- Support groups
- Survivorship programs
- Workshops
- Music therapy
- **Nutritional services**
- To learn more about all our Supportive Care offerings log onto: [cancercenterpx.org](http://cancercenterpx.org)
Your Breast Cancer Team

- Oncologist
- Nurse Practitioner
- Pharmacist
- Oncology Social Worker
- Practice Nurse
- Infusion Nurse
When to call?

*If experiencing:*
- Rash effecting more than 30% of your body OR if rash is blistering and/or involves your eyes and mouth
- Cough, shortness or breath, or trouble breathing
- Fever of 100.4 or higher
- Severe diarrhea (4 or more episodes per day)
- Signs of high blood sugar:
  - Excessive thirst
  - Dry mouth
  - Urinating frequently
  - Unexplained weight loss despite a good appetite
Contact Information

- **Phone Numbers**
  - Boston: 617-726-6500
  - Waltham: 781-487-6100
  - Danvers: 978-882-6060

- **Patient Portal:**
  - patientgateway.org