Dasatinib (Sprycel®)

Pronounced: da-SA-ti-nib

Classification: Tyrosine Kinase Inhibitor

About Dasatinib (Sprycel®)

Dasatinib is a tyrosine kinase inhibitor. A kinase is an enzyme that promotes cell growth. There are many types of kinases, which control different phases of cell growth. By blocking a particular enzyme from working, this medication can slow the growth of cancer cells.

How to Take Dasatinib

Dasatinib comes as a tablet to take by mouth. It is usually taken once a day, with or without food. Take dasatinib at around the same time every day. Do not crush, chew or break dasatinib tablets. If you miss a dose, take your next dose as scheduled. Do not take 2 doses to make up for a missed dose. This medication contains lactose, which may be important if you have lactose intolerance.

It is important to make sure you are taking the correct amount of medication every time. Before every dose, check that what you are taking matches what you have been prescribed.

The blood levels of this medication can be affected by certain foods and medications, so they should be avoided. These include: grapefruit, grapefruit juice, verapamil, ketoconazole, rifampin, phenytoin, St. John’s wort, and modafanil. Be sure to tell your healthcare provider about all medications and supplements you take.

Dasatinib is best absorbed by your stomach in the presence of stomach acid. For this reason, you should not take medications that reduce stomach acid, including proton pump inhibitors (omeprazole, Nexium, Protonix,Prevacid), or H2 blockers (tagamet, zantac, pepcid). Antacids, such as Tums and Rolaids, work by neutralizing stomach acid, and can be taken up to 2 hours before or 2 hours after your dasatinib dose.

Storage and Handling

Store your medication in the original, labeled container at room temperature and in a dry location (unless otherwise directed by your healthcare provider or pharmacist). This medication should not be stored in a pillbox. Keep containers out of reach of children and pets.

If a caregiver prepares your dose for you, they should consider wearing gloves or pour the pills directly from their container into the cap, a small cup, or directly into your hand. They should avoid touching the pills. They should always wash their hands before and after giving you the medication. Pregnant or nursing women should not prepare the dose for you. Ask your oncology team where to return any unused medication for disposal. Do not flush down the toilet or throw in the trash.

Where do I get this medication?

Certain cancer medications, including dasatinib, are only available through specialty pharmacies. If you need to get this medication through a specialty pharmacy, your provider will help you start this process. Where you can fill your prescriptions may also be influenced by your prescription drug coverage. Ask your health care provider or pharmacist for assistance in identifying where you can get this medication.
Insurance Information

This medication may be covered under your prescription drug plan. Patient assistance may be available to qualifying individuals depending upon prescription drug coverage. Co-pay cards, which reduce the patient co-pay responsibility for eligible commercially (non-government sponsored) insured patients, may also be available. Your care team can help you find these resources, if they are available.

Possible Side Effects of Dasatinib

There are a number of things you can do to manage the side effects of dasatinib. Talk to your care team about these recommendations. They can help you decide what will work best for you. These are some of the most common or important side effects:

Low White Blood Cell Count (Leukopenia or Neutropenia)

White blood cells (WBC) are important for fighting infection. While receiving treatment, your WBC count can drop, putting you at a higher risk of getting an infection. You should let your doctor or nurse know right away if you have a fever (temperature greater than 100.4°F or 38°C), sore throat or cold, shortness of breath, cough, burning with urination, or a sore that doesn’t heal.

Tips to preventing infection:

- Washing hands, both yours and your visitors, is the best way to prevent the spread of infection.
- Avoid large crowds and people who are sick (i.e.: those who have a cold, fever or cough or live with someone with these symptoms).
- When working in your yard, wear protective clothing including long pants and gloves.
- Do not handle pet waste.
- Keep all cuts or scratches clean.
- Shower or bath daily and perform frequent mouth care.
- Do not cut cuticles or ingrown nails. You may wear nail polish, but not fake nails.
- Ask your oncology care team before scheduling dental appointments or procedures.
- Ask your oncology care team before you, or someone you live with, has any vaccinations.

Low Red Blood Cell Count (Anemia)

Your red blood cells are responsible for carrying oxygen to the tissues in your body. When the red cell count is low, you may feel tired or weak. You should let your oncology care team know if you experience any shortness of breath, difficulty breathing or pain in your chest. If the count gets too low, you may receive a blood transfusion.

Low Platelet Count (Thrombocytopenia)

Platelets help your blood clot, so when the count is low you are at a higher risk of bleeding. Let your oncology care team know if you have any excess bruising or bleeding, including nose bleeds, bleeding gums or blood in your urine or stool. If the platelet count becomes too low, you may receive a transfusion of platelets.

- Do not use a razor (an electric razor is fine).
- Avoid contact sports and activities that can result in injury or bleeding.
- Do not take aspirin (salicylic acid), non-steroidal, anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDs) such as Motrin/Advil (ibuprofen), Aleve (naproxen), Celebrex (celecoxib) etc. as these can all increase the risk of bleeding. Please consult with your healthcare team regarding use of these agents and all over the counter medications/supplements while on therapy.
- Do not floss or use toothpicks and use a soft-bristle toothbrush to brush your teeth.

Nausea and/or Vomiting

Talk to your doctor or nurse so they can prescribe medications to help you manage nausea and vomiting. In addition, dietary changes may help. Avoid things that may worsen the symptoms, such as heavy or greasy/fatty, spicy or acidic foods (lemons, tomatoes, oranges). Try antacids, (e.g. milk of magnesia, calcium tablets such as Tums), saltines, or ginger ale to lessen symptoms.
Call your doctor or nurse if you are unable to keep fluids down for more than 12 hours or if you feel lightheaded or dizzy at any time.

**Diarrhea**

Diarrhea can be a serious side effect that can lead to dehydration. Notify your healthcare provider if you develop diarrhea.

Your oncology team can recommend medications to relieve diarrhea. Also, try eating low-fiber, bland foods, such as white rice and boiled or baked chicken. Avoid raw fruits, vegetables, whole grain breads, cereals and seeds. Soluble fiber is found in some foods and absorbs fluid, which can help relieve diarrhea. Foods high in soluble fiber include: applesauce, bananas (ripe), canned fruit, orange sections, boiled potatoes, white rice, products made with white flour, oatmeal, cream of rice, cream of wheat, and farina. Drink 8-10 glasses on non-alcoholic, un-caffeinated fluid a day to prevent dehydration.

**Fluid Retention**

Dasatinib can cause your body to hold on to too much fluid (called fluid retention). This may result in generalized swelling, bloating of the abdomen (ascites), fluid building up in the lining of the lungs (pleural effusion), or around your heart. Notify your healthcare team right away if you develop swelling in your arms, legs, feet or abdomen, unexpected weight gain, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, or if you develop a dry cough.

**Rash**

Some patients may develop a rash or itchy skin. Use an alcohol free moisturizer on your skin and lips; avoid moisturizers with perfumes or scents. Your doctor or nurse can recommend a topical medication if itching is bothersome. If your skin does crack or bleed, be sure to keep the area clean to avoid infection. Be sure to notify your healthcare provider of any rash that develops, as this can be a reaction. They can give you more tips on caring for your skin.

**Fatigue**

Fatigue is very common during cancer treatment and is an overwhelming feeling of exhaustion that is not usually relieved by rest. While on cancer treatment, and for a period after, you may need to adjust your schedule to manage fatigue. Plan times to rest during the day and conserve energy for more important activities. Exercise can help combat fatigue; a simple daily walk with a friend can help. Talk to your healthcare team for helpful tips on dealing with this side effect.

**Muscle or Joint Pain/Aches and Headache**

Your healthcare provider can recommend medications and other strategies to help relieve pain.

**Less common, but important side effects can include:**

- **Skin Reaction**: Some patients may develop a skin reaction/rash that is more severe and may also have fever, sore mouth or throat, blistering or peeling of the skin or in the mouth. Be sure to notify your healthcare provider of any skin reaction that develops, as this can be a very serious reaction.

- **Bleeding**: Dasatinib can cause bleeding. Notify your healthcare team if you notice any bleeding or bruising, including bleeding that may seem minor, such as bleeding gums and nosebleeds. Contact your care team or go to the emergency room if you experience bright red or dark tar-like stools, vomit blood or vomit that looks like coffee grounds, or develop any signs of stroke, including a severe headache, trouble talking, weakness on one side of the body or confusion.

- **Heart Problems**: This medication may cause an abnormal heart rate, called QT prolongation, congestive heart failure, or heart attack. Your healthcare provider will monitor certain electrolyte levels in your blood, as well as your heart function while you are taking this medication. Notify your healthcare provider or go to the emergency room right away if you feel chest pain, abnormal heartbeats, or if you feel dizzy or faint.

- **Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension**: This medication can cause high blood pressure in the vessels of your lungs. Contact your healthcare team immediately if you experience shortness of breath, extreme fatigue or swelling all over your body.

- **Tumor Lysis Syndrome**: If there are a large amount of tumor cells in your body prior to treatment, you are at risk for tumor lysis syndrome. This happens when the tumor cells die too quickly and their waste overwhelms the body. You may be given a medication (allopurinol) and IV fluids to help prevent this. If you experience nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or become lethargic (drowsy, sluggish), notify your oncology team right away. TLS can affect your kidney function. Your provider will
monitor your kidney function with blood work. Notify your provider if you have little or no urine output.

**Reproductive Concerns**

Exposure of an unborn child to this medication could cause birth defects, so you should not become pregnant or father a child while on this medication. Effective birth control is necessary during treatment and for at least 30 days after treatment stops. Even if your menstrual cycle stops or you believe you are not producing sperm, you could still be fertile and conceive. You should not breastfeed while taking this medication or for 2 weeks after your last dose.