Lapatinib (Tykerb®)

Pronounced: la-PA-ti-nib

Classification: Tyrosine Kinase Inhibitors

About Lapatinib (Tykerb®)

Lapatinib 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. Lapatinib works to inhibit the function of two types of tyrosine kinases: epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) and human epidermal growth factor receptor (HER-2).

How to Take Lapatinib

Lapatinib is taken by mouth, in a tablet form, once a day. The dose will consist of several tablets. Your dose will be determined by your care team. It should be taken on an empty stomach, one hour before or one hour after a meal, with a full glass of water. Take lapatinib at around the same time every day. If you miss a dose, do not double the next dose to make up for the missed dose.

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.

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 lapatinib, 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 Lapatinib

There are a number of things you can do to manage the side effects of lapatinib. 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:

**Liver Toxicity**

This medication can cause liver toxicity, which your doctor may monitor for using blood tests called liver function tests. Notify your healthcare provider if you notice yellowing of the skin or eyes, your urine appears dark or brown or pain in your abdomen, as these can be signs of liver toxicity.

**Diarrhea**

Diarrhea can be a serious side effect that can lead to dehydration. Notify your care team 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 of non-alcoholic, un-caffeinated fluid a day to prevent dehydration.

**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.

**Nail and Skin Changes**

Lapatinib has some unique nail and skin side effects that you may develop. Patients may develop a rash. While this rash may look like acne, it is not, and should not be treated with acne medications. The rash may appear red, swollen, crusty, dry, and feel sore. You may also develop very dry skin, which may crack, be itchy or become flaky or scaly. The rash typically starts in the first week of treatment but can occur at any time during treatment. Tips for managing your skin include:

- Use a thick, alcohol-free emollient lotion or cream on your skin at least twice a day, including right after bathing.
- Avoid sun exposure, as it can worsen the rash or cause a severe burn. Use a sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher and wear a hat and sunglasses to protect your head and face from the sun.
- Bathe/shower in cool or lukewarm (not hot) water and pat your skin dry.
- Use soaps, lotions, and laundry detergents without alcohol, perfumes, or dyes.
- Wear gloves to wash dishes or do housework or gardening.
- Drink plenty of water and try not to scratch or rub your skin.
- Notify your healthcare team if you develop a rash, as they can provide suggestions to manage the rash and/or prescribe a topical medication to apply to the rash or an oral medication.
- If you develop peeling or blistering of the skin, notify your healthcare team right away.

While receiving lapatinib, you may develop an inflammation of the skin around the nail bed/cuticle areas of toes or fingers, which is called paronychia. It can appear red, swollen or pus filled. Nails may develop “ridges” in them or fall off. You may also develop cuts or cracks that look like small paper cuts in the skin on your toes, fingers or knuckles. These side effects may appear several months after starting treatment but can last for many months after treatment stops.
• Follow the same recommendations for your skin (above).
• Don’t bite your nails or cuticles or cut the cuticles.
• Keep your fingernails and toenails clean and dry.
• You may use nail polish, but do not wear fake nails (gels, acrylics, overlay).
• Notify your doctor or nurse if any nails fall off or you develop any of these side effects or other skin abnormalities.

**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.

**Decrease in Appetite**

Nutrition is an important part of your care. Cancer treatment can affect your appetite and, in some cases, the side effects of treatment can make eating difficult. Ask your oncology care team about nutritional counseling services at your treatment center to help with food choices.

• Try to eat five or six small meals or snacks throughout the day, instead of 3 larger meals.
• If you are not eating enough, nutritional supplements may help.
• You may experience a metallic taste or find that food has no taste at all. You may dislike foods or beverages that you liked before receiving cancer treatment. These symptoms can last for several months or longer after treatment ends.
• Avoid any food that you think smells or tastes bad. If red meat is a problem, eat chicken, turkey, eggs, dairy products, and fish without a strong smell. Sometimes cold food has less of an odor.
• Add extra flavor to meat or fish by marinating it in sweet juices, sweet and sour sauce or dressings. Use seasonings like basil, oregano, or rosemary to add flavor. Bacon, ham, and onion can add flavor to vegetables.

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

• **Lung Changes and Pneumonitis:** Patients can develop an inflammation of the lungs (called pneumonitis) or interstitial lung disease while taking this medication. Notify your healthcare provider right away if you develop any new or worsening symptoms, including shortness of breath, trouble breathing, cough or fever.
• **Heart Problems:** Lapatinib is known to cause cardiac (heart) dysfunction, including severe heart failure (congestive heart failure). This medication can also cause slow or abnormal heartbeats or an abnormal heart rhythm called QT prolongation. Patients should have their heart function tested prior to starting this therapy and during therapy if any symptoms arise. You should report to your healthcare team any symptoms of cardiac dysfunction, including: feeling like your heart is racing or pounding, dizziness, unusual tiredness, lightheadedness, or shortness of breath.

**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 one week after treatment has ended. 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 one week after your last dose.