Pemigatinib (Pemazyre™)

Pronounced: PEM-i-GA-ti-nib

Classification: Kinase inhibitor

About Pemigatinib (Pemazyre™)

Pemigatinib is a 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. This medication works in patients whose tumors have tested positive for an FGFR2 fusion or rearrangement.

How to Take This Medication

This medication comes in a tablet form to be taken by mouth. You should swallow the tablet whole, with or without food. You should not crush, break or chew the tablet. If you miss a dose by 4 or more hours or if you vomit after taking your dose, do not take your next dose until its scheduled time. Do not take extra tablets to make up for a missed or vomited dose.

The blood levels of this medication can be affected by certain foods and medications, so they should be avoided. These include: grapefruit, grapefruit juice, itraconazole, esomeprazole, and other proton pump inhibitors, carbamazepine, phenobarbital, verapamil, ketoconazole, rifampin, phenytoin, St. John’s wort, and modafinil, among others. Certain medications taken at the same time may lead the provider to reduce your dose of therapy as well. Be sure to tell your healthcare provider about all medications and supplements you take.

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. You should also double-check with your provider what days you should take this medication.

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 it down the toilet or throw it in the trash.

Where do I get this medication?

Certain cancer medications 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**

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

**Hyperphosphatemia**

This medication can cause a high level of phosphate in your blood. You will have blood drawn to monitor the level of phosphate. Symptoms of hyperphosphatemia include muscle cramps, numbness, and tingling around the mouth. If you have any of these symptoms you should call your provider right away. A change in your treatment, diet and medical treatment may be needed to manage hyperphosphatemia.

**Loss or Thinning of Scalp and Body Hair (Alopecia)**

Your hair may become thin, brittle, or may fall out. This typically begins two to three weeks after treatment starts. This hair loss can be all body hair, including pubic, underarm, legs/arms, eyelashes, and nose hairs. The use of scarves, wigs, hats, and hairpieces may help. Hair generally starts to regrow soon after treatment is completed. Remember your hair helps keep you warm in cold weather, so a hat is particularly important in cold weather or to protect you from the sun.

**Diarrhea**

Your oncology care 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.

**Nail Changes**

Your fingernails/toenails may become dark, brittle, split, or fall off. Keep your fingernails and toenails clean and dry. You may use nail polish, but do not wear fake nails (gels, acrylics, overlay). If any nails fall off, clean the nail bed well with soap and water and cover with a band-aid.

**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 or Taste Changes**

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.

**Nausea and/or Vomiting**

Talk to your oncology care team 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 saltines, or ginger ale to lessen symptoms.

Call your oncology care team if you are unable to keep fluids down for more than 12 hours or if you feel lightheaded or dizzy at any time.

**Constipation**

There are several things you can do to prevent or relieve constipation. Include fiber in your diet (fruits and vegetables), drink 8-10 glasses of non-alcoholic fluids a day, and keep active. A stool softener once or twice a day may prevent constipation. If you do not have a bowel movement for 2-3 days, you should contact your healthcare team for suggestions to relieve the constipation.

**Mouth Issues**

Certain cancer treatments can cause sores or soreness in your mouth and/or throat. Notify your oncology care team if your mouth, tongue, inside of your cheek or throat becomes white, ulcerated or painful. Performing regular mouth care can help prevent or manage mouth sores. If mouth sores become painful, your doctor or nurse can recommend a pain reliever.

- Brush with a soft-bristle toothbrush or cotton swab twice a day.
- Avoid mouthwashes that contain alcohol. A baking soda and/or salt with warm water mouth rinse (2 level teaspoons of baking soda or 1 level teaspoon of salt in an eight ounce glass of warm water) is recommended 4 times daily.
- If your mouth becomes dry, eat moist foods, drink plenty of fluids (6-8 glasses), and suck on sugarless hard candy.
- Avoid smoking and chewing tobacco, drinking alcoholic beverages, and citrus juices.

Some patients may also have issues with dry mouth. Taking frequent sips of water or sucking on ice or sugar-free hard candy can help. You can also talk to your provider about medications that can help manage dry mouth.

**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 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 the 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.

**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.

**Muscle or Joint Pain/Aches**

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

**Hypophosphatemia**

In some cases, this medication can cause a low level of phosphate in the blood. Symptoms include weakness, trouble breathing, and loss of appetite. You should notify your provider if you are having any of these symptoms.

**Dry Skin**

You may experience dry skin while taking this medication. Use moisturizing soaps and warm, not hot water when bathing. Use a fragrance-free moisturizer to hydrate your skin. In cold weather protect your skin using gloves, a scarf, and a hat. Also, make sure you are staying hydrated by drinking enough non-caffeinated fluids each day.

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

- **Eye Concerns:** this medication can cause dry eyes, inflammation of the cornea (the front part of the eye), increased tear production, and a disorder of the retina. You will need to see an eye specialist before you begin treatment, then every 2 months for the first 6 months of treatment, and then every 3 months until you are done treatment. You can use artificial tears to moisturize your eyes. Your provider may prescribe one. In rare cases, this medication can cause retinal pigment epithelial detachment. If you have any symptoms of eye issues such as blurred vision, flashes of light, or see black spots you need to call your provider right away.

**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 one week after treatment for both male and female patients. 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 receiving this medication or for one week after your last dose.