What is Imatinib?

Imatinib is a cytotoxic drug which works by inhibiting the growth of abnormal cells in Philadelphia chromosome positive acute lymphoblastic leukaemia. In this condition the white blood cells start growing out of control so Imatinib is used to inhibit the growth of these cells.

Imatinib should be handled with care. Women of childbearing age should avoid handling the tablets because contact with the medicine may be harmful to the foetus. Always wear gloves when handling the tablets.

Imatinib is supplied as 100mg or 400mg tablets packaged in blister packs. The tablets should be stored in the original packaging at room temperature below 30°C. **(DO NOT CUT THE BLISTER STRIPS.)**
How is it given?

Imatinib should be taken each morning with breakfast. Imatinib is a local irritant and MUST be taken in a sitting position with a large glass of water (250ml/8oz or at least 100ml/4oz for children less than 3 years of age). Apple juice may be used instead of water. DO NOT use any other beverage like milk, Coca-Cola or orange juice.

**Giving Imatinib to patients that cannot swallow tablets**

Tablets can be dispersed into a glass of water or apple juice.

**Gloves MUST be worn when carrying out this procedure**

- Place the required number of tablets for the dose being given into a glass (only to be used for this purpose).
- Add water or apple juice to the glass – approximately 50ml for a 100mg Tablet and 200ml for a 400mg tablet.
- Stir with a spoon until dispersed.
- The suspension should then be given immediately.
- The glass and spoon should then be cleaned thoroughly in hot soapy water separately from any other items. The glass and spoon should be kept just for this purpose.

What happens if I spill some of the liquid?

- Put gloves on.
- Mop up Imatinib liquid with kitchen paper towel. Clean area carefully afterwards with a little bit of warm water using kitchen towels. All gloves and kitchen towels should be put in a double bag and placed in the household rubbish.
- Wash hands afterwards.
Are there any precautions about food or other medications?

Care needs to be taken whilst a patient is receiving Imatinib. If the patient requires Paracetamol the recommended doses should not be exceeded.

The following medication and foods should be avoided while on Imatinib:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grapefruit juice</th>
<th>Fluconazole</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Erythromycin</td>
<td>Ketaconazole</td>
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<tr>
<td>Azithromycin</td>
<td>Itraconazole</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarithromycin</td>
<td>Voriconazole</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rifampin</td>
<td>Cimetidine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cannabinoids</td>
<td>Zafirleukast</td>
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<tr>
<td>(marijuana or dronabinol)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zileuton</td>
<td>Dexamethasone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aprepitant</td>
<td>Codeine Phosphate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Levothyroxine</td>
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In addition, drug interactions in patients receiving Prochlorperazine and Warfarin are possible; this should be discussed with the Consultant for a possible alternative to avoid an interaction occurring.

Check with the doctor, nurse, or pharmacist before giving any other prescription or non-prescription medicines, herbal medicine or vitamins to your child.
What should I do if a dose is missed?

If a dose is missed, give it as soon as you remember that day. **Never give a double dose.**

If your child vomits within 30 minutes of receiving a dose, give it again. If your child vomits after 30 minutes, do not repeat the dose.

Call Kamran’s Ward if more than one dose is missed or vomited.

What are the side effects?

**Common side effects**

Please note that the patient might not necessarily experience all the side effects listed below.

- Low blood counts
- Sleeplessness and tiredness
- Headache, dizziness, taste disturbance
- Swelling of the eyelids, conjunctivitis, dried eyes, blurred vision
- Flushing
- Coughing, shortness of breath
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Diarrhoea or constipation
- Abdominal pain, flatulence, abdominal distension
- Mouth ulcers
- Unexpected bleeding or bruising (when you hurt yourself)
- Dry mouth
- Eczema and / or rash, dry skin
- Swelling of the face
- Hair loss
- Night sweats
• Eyes might become sensitive to light
• Muscle spasms and cramps
• Bone pain and joint swelling
• Chills
• Weight increase or decrease

When should I call the doctor?

You should call Kamran’s Ward if you notice any of the following:
• Fever or chills
• Continued vomiting or diarrhoea
• Bleeding or unusual bleeding
• Skin rash, swelling around the face
• Joint swelling
• Signs of an allergic reaction such as: rash or hives or wheezing

Effects on ability to drive

This applies to older patients – caution should be taken when driving a car because Imatinib can cause dizziness or blurred vision during treatment.

How do I store the medication?

Store all medication in the original containers and away from direct sunlight or heat and below 30°C. Do not store in humid places such as the bathroom. Keep out of reach and sight of children, locked away if possible. If dispersing tablets in water
this should only be done immediately before giving to the child and not done in advance.

Are their any precautions when handling the medications?

All caregivers should wear gloves when handling urine, stools and vomit while the child is receiving Imatinib. Urine, stools and vomit can be safely disposed of in a toilet.

Any clothing or bed linens that are contaminated with urine, stools or vomit should be washed separately from other laundry in hot water and detergent. Anyone handling the contaminated laundry should wear gloves.

What else do I need to know?

• Blood samples will be needed to watch the effects of the medication.
• You and your child (if they are old enough) should know the names of all the medication being taken.
• Share this information with anyone involved in your child’s care.
• Always make sure you have enough medicine on hand.
• Check the label for the expiry date.
• Bring outdated or extra medication back to Pharmacy for disposal. Do not flush medication down the toilet or it in the bin.
• Bring any empty bottles back to the ward. Pharmacy needs the bottles back for their records.
• If too much or the wrong kind of chemotherapy medicine is taken, call your doctor straight away.
Questions or concerns

If you have any questions or concerns, all the contact numbers you need are in your shared care diary.

If you need an interpreter or need a document in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call 01865 221473 or email PALSJR@orh.nhs.uk