



Instructions for Patients Having Diarrhea on Nexavar

What are the side effects from taking Nexavar?

You have been prescribed Nexavar, a chemotherapy drug that you take by mouth for the treatment of Hepatocellular cancer (HCC). One side effect that you may get from taking Nexavar is diarrhea.

What is Diarrhea?

Diarrhea is the passage of loose or watery stools three or more times a day with or without pain. Diarrhea caused by chemotherapy may last for up to three weeks after treatment ends. If you have two bowel movements (BM) in one day when you most often only have one, this is not diarrhea, especially if these are normally formed or appearing stools. It may be sign that you will have diarrhea, but this is not the time to start medication.

When should I call the clinic nurse?

At the earliest signs of diarrhea, call the clinic nurse at (734) 647-8902. She will tell you how to take your anti-diarrheal medication. The nurse is going to want to know how many BM's you've had in a day.

How should I take my Imodium?

Take 2 Imodium® pills at the start of diarrhea (each pill is 2mg). Your nurse will confirm with you when you call to say that you have diarrhea, if you will keep taking 1 Imodium® (2mg) at each loose stool after the first dose for a maximum of 8 pills total in a 24 hour period (16mg total) or, if you will follow a different treatment plan. If there's any delay in the nurse getting back to you, follow this plan: 1 Imodium® after each loose BM.

What can I do to make myself more comfortable?

- Try a clear liquid diet (water, weak tea, apple juice, peach nectar, clear broth, popsicles, and plain gelatin) as soon as diarrhea starts or when you feel that it's going to start. Avoid acidic drinks, such as tomato juice, citrus juices, and fizzy soft drinks.
- Eat frequent small meals.
- Try small amounts of low-fiber foods, such as, rice, bananas, applesauce, yogurt, mashed potatoes, low-fat cottage cheese, and dry toast when the diarrhea starts to get better.
- Eat foods high in potassium (bananas, potatoes, apricots). Potassium is mineral that is lost through diarrhea.
- If diarrhea lasts longer than two days, start a liquid diet and add low-fiber foods, as tolerated.
- Clean your anal area with a mild soap after each bowel movement, rinse well with warm water, and pat dry.
- Check anal area for red, scaly, broken skin.
- Put on a water-repellent ointment, such as A&D Ointment® to the anal area.
- Take medicine for diarrhea or skin irritation as told by your doctor.

Do not eat:

- Foods that may bother your digestive tract
- Whole grain breads/cereals or bran
- Fried or greasy food
- Nuts
- Raw fruits or vegetables
- Rich pastries, candy or jelly
- Strong spices/herbs
- Caffeinated, alcoholic, or carbonated drinks
- Milk/milk products
- Very hot/very cold foods

What should I do if my diarrhea doesn't get better?

Call the clinic if your diarrhea does not get better while taking Imodium® and making changes to your diet. If you have stomach pain or cramps, let your nurse know. Pain medication may be needed. If you are having nausea, let us know that, too.

What should I do if I don't feel like eating?

Having a poor appetite is a common side effect of cancer and certain treatments. Emotional and physical stress can affect your appetite, too. There are over-the-counter liquid supplements if you have a decrease in appetite. You may want to try one of these: Boost[®], Ensure[®], or Carnation Instant Breakfast[®].

The Cancer Center has registered dietitians that can help you manage your symptoms. Please let us know if you'd like to make an appointment with a dietitian.

What else can I do to take care of myself?

Staying active, along with periods of rest, is important to mind-body health. Many people find that deep breathing exercises help during times of stress. Talk with your health care provider if you feel you need extra help. The Cancer Center has many resources to help you and your family.

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