Managing Side Effects of VEGF Receptor Blockers

A Vascular Endothelial Growth Factor (VEGF) receptor blocker is a type of “targeted therapy”. This medicine is used to help block the growth and spread of cancer. It works by cutting off the supply of blood and nutrients to cancer cells. This helps prevent cancer cells from dividing and making new cells. When taking this medicine tell your doctor about any medicines you are taking (prescription or over the counter) and if you are scheduled to have a medical or dental procedure.

What are the common side effects of this medicine?
Every person responds differently to treatment. Some of the more common side effects are: skin rash, mouth sores, diarrhea, high blood pressure, bleeding/bruising.

How do I manage side effects?

- **Skin Rash**
  
  A rash can appear within 3 to 4 weeks after your first dose of the medicine. The rash can be more severe at first, and then lessen over time. The treatment for this rash may include creams or lotions for your skin or prescription medicines that you can take by mouth. Your doctor may change your dose of medicine if needed.

  ▶ Keep your skin and the rash moisturized. Use moisturizing creams or lotions on all areas where the rash is found, including your scalp if needed, to prevent dryness and more irritation.
Use urea-containing moisturizing creams and lotions. Colloidal oatmeal lotions may also help control dry skin.

Do not use over the counter products on your skin that contain alcohol.

Take short lukewarm showers. **Do not shower more than one time each day.** Use body creams or lotions while your skin is still damp. This will help keep your skin moist and prevent dryness.

If you have a dry or itchy scalp, you may use anti-itch or anti-dandruff shampoos.

Wear comfortable loose fitting clothes. Cotton fabrics are best.

Being in the sun may cause your rash to get worse. Use a hypoallergenic sunscreen with a **SPF 30 or higher** before going outdoors. Reapply sunscreen every 2 hours, even on cloudy days. You need to put sunscreen on again after being in the water or after working up a sweat.

### Mouth Sores

- Regular mouth care is important. Keep your mouth and teeth clean.
- Check your mouth each day for bleeding or sores.
- Drink plenty of fluids and eat moist foods.
- Do not eat foods that may irritate or hurt your mouth.
- See the patient education handout [Cancer Therapy: Managing Side Effects – Mouth Sores](#).

### Diarrhea

- Drink plenty of clear fluids to prevent dehydration.
- Eat bland foods that are low in fiber. Do not eat spicy, greasy or fried foods.
- See the patient education handout [Cancer Therapy: Managing Side Effects – Diarrhea](#).
• High Blood Pressure
  ▶ Keep track of your blood pressure every day when taking this medicine. Use a blood pressure log to write down each blood pressure reading.
  ▶ Always **recheck** your blood pressure if you get a reading that is higher or lower than normal. Wait at least one minute between blood pressure checks.
  ▶ See patient education handout **How to Check Your Own Blood Pressure**.

When should I call my doctor?

**Call your doctor right away if you have any of the following:**

- Fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or higher
- Diarrhea (3 loose stools in 24 hours)
- Nausea and vomiting that prevents you from eating or drinking
- Open sores in your mouth
- Problems with mouth pain or difficulty with eating or drinking
- Swelling in your hands, feet or ankles
- Skin changes on palms of the hands and the bottom of the feet
- Extreme weakness and tiredness
- Bruising more easily
- A blood pressure reading that is higher than normal (the top number goes up more than 20 points or the bottom number is above 90)

**Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room if you have:**

- Sudden chest pain, shortness of breath or changes in heartbeat
- Severe headache, confusion, change in speech, weakness or numbness
- Bleeding that does not stop or is very heavy
- Blood in vomit, vomit that looks like coffee grounds
- Bowel movements that are red or black like tar