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2. Gefitinib

Gefitinib

Generic name: gefitinib [*ge-FI-ti-nib*]**Brand name:** [Iressa](#)**Dosage form:** oral tablet (250 mg)**Drug class:** [EGFR inhibitors](#)[Medically reviewed](#) by Drugs.com on Dec 11, 2024. Written by [Cerner Multum](#).[Uses](#) [Side effects](#) [Warnings](#) [Before taking](#) [Dosage](#) [Interactions](#)

What is gefitinib?

Gefitinib is a cancer medication that interferes with the growth and spread of cancer cells in the body.

Gefitinib is used to treat [non-small cell lung cancer](#).

Gefitinib is sometimes used to treat cancer that has spread to other parts of the body.

Gefitinib may also be used for purposes not listed in this medication guide.

Gefitinib side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction**: hives; difficult breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Gefitinib may cause serious side effects. Call your doctor at once if you have:

- severe or ongoing [diarrhea](#);
- sudden chest pain or discomfort, new or worsening cough with fever, trouble breathing;
- blurred vision, watery eyes, eye pain or redness, eyes being more sensitive to light;
- **liver problems**--nausea, upper stomach pain, [itching](#), tired feeling, loss of appetite, dark urine, clay-colored stools, [jaundice](#) (yellowing of the skin or eyes);
- **signs of stomach bleeding**--severe stomach pain, bloody or tarry stools, coughing up blood or vomit that looks like coffee grounds; or
- **severe skin reaction**--fever, [sore throat](#), swelling in your face or tongue, burning in your eyes, skin pain followed by a red or purple skin rash that spreads (especially in the face or upper body) and causes blistering and peeling.

Common side effects of gefitinib may include:

- diarrhea;
- acne;
- dry skin; or
- itching or skin rash.

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

 [Gefitinib side effects](#) (more detail)

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Warnings

Follow all directions on your medicine label and package. Tell each of your healthcare providers about all your medical conditions, allergies, and all medicines you use.

Before taking this medicine

You should not use gefitinib if you are allergic to it.

To make sure gefitinib is safe for you, tell your doctor if you have:

- [liver disease](#);
- kidney disease;
- vision problems;
- breathing problems, lung disease other than [lung cancer](#); or
- if you take a blood thinner ([warfarin](#), [Coumadin](#), [Jantoven](#)).

Do not use gefitinib if you are pregnant. It could harm the unborn baby. Use effective [birth control](#) to prevent pregnancy while you are using gefitinib and for at least 2 weeks after your treatment ends.

This medicine may affect fertility (the ability to have children) in women. Tell your doctor if you plan to become pregnant.

It is not known whether gefitinib passes into breast milk or if it could harm a nursing baby. **Do not breast-feed while taking gefitinib.**

How should I use gefitinib?

Your doctor will perform blood tests to make sure you have the correct tumor type to be treated with gefitinib.

Follow all directions on your prescription label. Your doctor may occasionally change your dose to make sure you get the

best results. Do not use this medicine in larger or smaller amounts or for longer than recommended.

You may take gefitinib with or without food.

To make swallowing easier:

- Place the tablet into a glass of water (4 to 8 ounces) and stir for about 15 minutes.
- Do not use any liquid other than water.
- Stir and drink this mixture right away. Do not save for later use.
- To make sure you get the entire dose, add 4 to 8 more ounces of water to the same glass, swirl gently and drink right away.
- This mixture may also be given through a **nasogastric (NG) tube**. Ask your healthcare provider for instructions.

While using gefitinib, you may need frequent blood tests to check your liver function.

Store at room temperature away from moisture and heat.

Gefitinib dosing information

Usual Adult Dose for Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer:

250 mg orally once a day until disease progression or unacceptable toxicity

NOTE: For patients who have [difficulty swallowing](#) tablets immerse the tablet in 4 to 8 ounces of water (noncarbonated) and stir until dispersed (about 15 minutes). Drink the liquid or administer through a nasogastric tube. Rinse the container with 4 to 8 ounces of water and drink or administer through nasogastric tube.

Comments:

-Select patients for the first-line treatment of metastatic NSCLC with this drug based on the presence of EGFR exon 19 deletions or exon 21 L858R mutations in their tumor or plasma specimens.

Use: For first-line treatment of metastatic non-[small cell lung cancer](#) (NSCLC) in patients whose tumors have epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) exon 19 deletions or exon 21 (L858R) substitution mutations as detected by an FDA-approved test.

 [Detailed Gefitinib dosage information](#)

What happens if I miss a dose?

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember. Skip the missed dose if your next dose is less than 12 hours away. **Do not** take extra medicine to make up the missed dose.

What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222.

What should I avoid while using gefitinib?

Avoid taking an antacid or stomach acid reducer ([Nexium](#), [Pepcid](#), [Prevacid](#), [Prilosec](#), [Zantac](#), and others) within 6 hours before or 6 hours after you take gefitinib. These other medicines can make gefitinib much less effective when taken at the same time.

What other drugs will affect gefitinib?

Other drugs may interact with gefitinib, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, [vitamins](#), and [herbal products](#). Tell each of your health care providers about all medicines you use now and any medicine you start or stop using.

 [Gefitinib drug interactions](#) (more detail)

Does gefitinib interact with my other drugs?

Enter medications to view a detailed interaction report using our [Drug Interaction Checker](#).

gefitinib

+

Enter a drug name

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Further information


Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use this medication only for the indication prescribed.

Always consult your healthcare provider to ensure the information displayed on this page applies to your personal circumstances.

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DRUG STATUS

Availability	
Rx	Prescription only
Pregnancy & Lactation	
	Risk data available
CSA Schedule*	
N/A	Not a controlled drug
Approval History	
	Drug history at FDA

User Reviews & Ratings

8.9 / 10

[8 Reviews](#)

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