

# ORAL CANCER TREATMENT EDUCATION



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## BEXAROTENE

### Name of your medication

Generic name — bexarotene (bek-SAYR-uh-teen)  
Brand name — Targretin® (tar-GREH-tin)

### Common uses

Bexarotene is used to treat people with cutaneous T-cell lymphomas.

Bexarotene may also be used for other treatments.

### Dose and schedule

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Taking bexarotene as instructed is important to allow your treatment to be as effective as possible, so here are some key points to remember.

- Your dose may vary because the dose of bexarotene is based on weight; the usual dose is 300 milligrams (300 mg) to 750 milligrams (700 mg) by mouth once per day at a scheduled time.
- Bexarotene should be taken with food with a full glass of water and at the same time each day.
- Bexarotene should be taken whole and not crushed, cut, or dissolved. If you are unable to swallow bexarotene, talk to your care provider or pharmacist for possible options.
- If you miss a dose of bexarotene, **do not** take an extra dose or two doses at one time. Simply take your next dose at the regularly scheduled time. Be sure to write down if you miss a dose and let your care provider know about any missed doses.

### Drug and food interactions

- Bexarotene has many drug interactions. Please inform your care providers of all prescription medications, over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and herbal products. Avoid taking concurrent vitamin A without approval. Avoid concurrent gemfibrozil (Lopid®) with bexarotene.
- Grapefruit or grapefruit juice may interact with bexarotene; avoid eating or drinking these during treatment with bexarotene.
- Talk with your care provider or pharmacist before taking new medications or supplements, or receiving any vaccines.

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### Storage and handling

Handle bexarotene with care. Just like when chemotherapy is given into the vein, this drug can be toxic, and exposure of the drug to others should be limited.

- Store bexarotene at 36°F to 77°F in a dry location away from light.
- Avoid exposing to high temperatures and humidity after the bottle is opened.
- Keep bexarotene out of reach of children and pets.
- Leave bexarotene in the provided packaging until it is ready to be taken.
- Whenever possible, you should give bexarotene to yourself and follow the steps below. If a family member, friend, or caregiver needs to give the bexarotene to you, they also need to follow these steps:
  1. Wash hands with soap and water.
  2. Put on gloves to avoid touching the medication. (Gloves are not necessary if you give the drug to yourself.)
  3. Gently transfer the bexarotene from its package to a small medicine or other disposable cup.
  4. Administer the medicine immediately by mouth with water.
  5. Remove gloves and do not use them for anything else.
  6. Throw gloves and medicine cup in household trash.
  7. Wash hands with soap and water.
- If a daily pill box or pill reminder will be used, contact your care team before using:
  - The person filling the box or reminder should wear gloves (gloves are not necessary if you are filling the box or reminder).
  - When empty, the box or reminder should be washed with soap and water before refilling. Be sure to wash hands with soap and water after the task is complete, whether or not gloves are worn.
- If you have any unused bexarotene, **do not** throw it in the trash and **do not** flush it down the sink or toilet. Talk to your care provider or pharmacist about proper disposal of bexarotene.
- If you are traveling, put your bexarotene's packaging in a sealed plastic bag. Ask your pharmacist if any additional travel precautions are needed.

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### Side Effects of Bexarotene

Common side effects that have been known to happen in about one third or more of patients taking bexarotene are listed on the left side of this table. You **MAY NOT** experience these side effects. Options to help manage any side effects that do occur are included on the right side of this table. These should be discussed with your care provider. If you experience any side effect you cannot manage or that is not listed here, contact your care provider

Possible Side Effect	Management
<p><b>Changes in electrolytes and other laboratory values</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High cholesterol</li> <li>• High triglycerides</li> <li>• Low thyroid hormone levels</li> <li>• High bilirubin</li> <li>• High liver enzymes</li> </ul>	<p>Changes in some laboratory values may occur and will be monitored by a simple blood test.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You may not feel any symptoms if the changes are mild, and they usually are not a sign of a serious problem.</li> <li>• More severe changes may occur, which can be a sign of a serious problem.</li> </ul> <p>Notify your care provider if you have any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shortness of breath</li> <li>• Chest discomfort</li> <li>• Weakness or fatigue</li> <li>• New aches and pains</li> <li>• Headaches</li> <li>• Dizziness</li> <li>• Swelling of your legs or feet</li> <li>• Red- or brown-colored urine</li> <li>• Constipation</li> <li>• Dry hair</li> <li>• Slow heart rate</li> <li>• Unexplained weight gain</li> </ul>
<p><b>Headache</b></p>	<p>Ask your provider what you may use to help with this discomfort.</p> <p>Contact your provider right away if your headache has any of the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follows a head injury</li> <li>• Is severe or starts suddenly</li> <li>• Does not go away after three days</li> <li>• Is associated with vomiting, visual disturbance, neck stiffness, drowsiness, confusion, rash, weakness in an arm or leg, or numbness, or is made worse by coughing or lowering the head</li> </ul>

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Possible Side Effect	Management
<p><b>Decreased white blood cells (WBCs) and increased risk for infection</b></p>	<p>Your WBCs should be monitored by a simple blood test. When your WBCs are low, you are at a greater risk of having an infection. Take the following precautions to protect yourself from infection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wash your hands often, especially before eating and after using the bathroom.</li> <li>• Avoid crowds and people with fevers, flu, or other infection.</li> <li>• Bathe regularly to keep good personal hygiene.</li> </ul> <p>Contact your care provider if you experience any signs or symptoms of an infection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever (temperature more than 100.4°F or 38°C)</li> <li>• Chills</li> <li>• Sore throat</li> <li>• Burning with urination</li> <li>• Unusual tiredness</li> <li>• A sore that becomes red, is draining, or does not heal</li> </ul> <p>Check with your care provider before taking any medicine for a fever or chills.</p>
<p><b>Fatigue</b></p>	<p>You may be more tired than usual or have less energy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay as active as possible, but know it is okay to rest as needed.</li> <li>• Try to do some activity every day.</li> <li>• Plan your activities, and do them at a time of day when you feel a bit more energetic.</li> <li>• Avoid operating heavy machinery if you feel too tired.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Diarrhea (loose and/or urgent bowel movements)</b></p>	<p>Monitor how many bowel movements you have each day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink 8–10 glasses of water or fluid each day unless your care provider has instructed you to limit your fluid intake.</li> <li>• Eat small, frequent meals throughout the day rather than a few large meals.</li> <li>• Eat bland, low-fiber foods, such as bananas, applesauce, potatoes, chicken, rice, and toast.</li> <li>• Avoid high-fiber foods, such as raw vegetables, raw fruits, and whole grains.</li> <li>• Avoid foods that cause gas, such as broccoli and beans.</li> <li>• Avoid lactose-containing foods, such as yogurt and milk.</li> <li>• Avoid spicy, fried, and greasy foods.</li> </ul> <p>Contact your provider if either of the following occurs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of bowel movements you have in a day increases by four or more.</li> <li>• You feel dizzy or lightheaded.</li> </ul> <p>Your care provider may recommend an over-the-counter medication called loperamide (Imodium®) to help with your diarrhea, but talk to your care provider before starting this medication.</p>
<p><b>Sun sensitivity—sunburn easily</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid sun exposure as much as possible to decrease the risk of sunburn. The highest exposure to UV (ultraviolet) radiation occurs between the hours of 10 am and 4 pm.</li> <li>• Wear long-sleeved clothing, with UV protection if possible.</li> <li>• Wear broad-brimmed hats.</li> <li>• Apply broad-spectrum sunscreen (UVA/UVB) with at least SPF 30 as often as directed on the bottle.</li> <li>• Use lip balm with at least SPF 30.</li> </ul>

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### Serious side effects

- Bexarotene may be harmful to your pancreas. Speak to your care provider to know when you need to have laboratory tests done to monitor your pancreas. Seek medical attention if you have severe abdominal pain or tenderness, fever, nausea, or vomiting.
- Bexarotene may cause liver problems. Contact your care provider if you notice yellowing of the skin or whites of your eyes, dark or brown urine, or unusual bleeding or bruising.
- This medication may cause vision changes, such as cataracts. Report any changes in eyesight to your care provider.
- Bexarotene is related to vitamin A. Limit vitamin A intake to  $\leq 15,000$  IU/day.

If you experience ANY uncontrolled side effect, call your physician or healthcare center immediately:

**(INSTITUTIONAL CONTACT INFO)**

### Handling body fluids and waste

Since bexarotene remains in your body for several days after it is taken, some of the drug may be present in urine, stool, sweat, or vomit. Once you have started to take bexarotene, it is important to follow the instructions below every day for as long as your treatment lasts. This is to keep yourself, loved ones, and the environment as safe as possible.

- Pregnant women should avoid touching anything that may be soiled with body fluids from the patient.
- Toilet and septic systems
  - You may use the same toilet, septic tank, and/or sewer that you usually use. If you have a low-flow toilet, close the lid and flush twice to ensure all waste has been discarded.
  - If the toilet or toilet seat becomes soiled with urine, stool, or vomit, clean the surfaces before other people use the toilet.
  - Wash hands with soap and water after using the toilet.
- If you need a bedpan, be sure your caregiver knows to wear gloves to assist with cleanup and to wash the bedpan with soap and water every day.
- If you do not have good control of bladder or bowels, use a disposable pad with a plastic back, a diaper, or a sheet to absorb body waste.
- Wash any skin that has been exposed to body waste or bexarotene with soap and water.
- Linens or clothing that are soiled with body fluids or body waste should be washed separately from other linens and clothing. If you do not have a washer, place the soiled linens in a plastic bag until they can be washed.
- Wash hands with soap and water after touching linens or clothing that may be soiled with body fluids.

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### Pregnancy, sexual activity, and contraception

- Women must not become pregnant and men should not get a partner pregnant while taking bexarotene.
- Women of reproductive potential should obtain a negative serum pregnancy test within 1 week prior to starting bexarotene. A monthly pregnancy test should be obtained while patient remains on bexarotene.
- For women of reproductive potential, bexarotene should be started on the 2nd or 3rd day of a typical menstrual period.
- Female patients with reproductive potential must use effective contraception for 1 month prior to the initiation of therapy, during therapy, and for at least 1 month following discontinuation of therapy. In addition, 2 reliable forms of contraception should be used simultaneously, 1 of which should be non-hormonal.
- Effective contraception could include 1 or more of the following: oral contraceptive (non-hormonal preferred), barrier methods, etc.
- Male patients with sexual partners who are pregnant, possibly pregnant, or who could become pregnant must use condoms during sexual intercourse while taking bexarotene and for at least 1 month after the last dose of the drug.
- Do not breastfeed while taking bexarotene and for 1 month after the last dose of bexarotene.
- Please inform your care provider if you become pregnant. You should stop taking bexarotene immediately if you become pregnant.
- It is safe to hug and kiss. Special precautions may be needed for sexual activity while on oral chemotherapy, and you are encouraged to ask your care provider.

### Obtaining medication

- Talk with your care provider about the process for obtaining your bexarotene.

\_\_\_\_\_ (PHARMACY OR SPECIALTY PHARMACY CONTACT INFO)

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### Additional resources

**Product website:** <http://targretin.com>

**Product prescribing information:** <https://pi.bauschhealth.com/globalassets/BHC/PI/TargretinCapsules-PI.pdf>

**Product resources:** <http://targretin.com/coupon-eligibility>

**Updated – February 2, 2024**

### Additional instructions

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**Important notice:** The Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC), Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association (HOPA), National Community Oncology Dispensing Association, Inc. (NCODA), and Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) have collaborated in gathering information for and developing this patient education guide. This guide represents a brief summary of the medication derived from information provided by the drug manufacturer and other resources. This guide does not cover all existing information related to the possible uses, directions, doses, precautions, warnings, interactions, adverse effects, or risks associated with this medication and should not substitute for the advice of a qualified healthcare professional. Provision of this guide is for informational purposes only and does not constitute or imply endorsement, recommendation, or favoring of this medication by ACCC, HOPA, NCODA, or ONS, who assume no liability for and cannot ensure the accuracy of the information presented. The collaborators are not making any representations with respect to the medications whatsoever, and any and all decisions, with respect to such medications, are at the sole risk of the individual consuming the medication. All decisions related to taking this medication should be made with the guidance and under the direction of a qualified healthcare professional.

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