

# Tolvaptan

## PHARMACY INFORMATION SHEET

### WHAT IT DOES

Tolvaptan slows the growth of cysts in patients with autosomal dominant polycystic kidney disease, also known as ADPKD; this may slow the rate of kidney damage.

### HOW IT WORKS

Tolvaptan blocks a hormone called vasopressin. Vasopressin does many things in the body such as helping it retain water. Vasopressin is also one of many factors that leads to growth of kidney cysts in patients with autosomal dominant polycystic kidney disease. Blocking this hormone may help to slow cyst growth.

### HOW TO TAKE IT

Tolvaptan is taken as two pills per day — a larger dose in the morning and a lower dose in the afternoon. The afternoon dose should be taken approximately 8 hours after the morning dose with or without food. Drink plenty of water while on this medication unless told otherwise by your physician.

### WHAT TO DO IF YOU MISS A DOSE

If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you think about it. If it is close to your next dose (within 3 hours), skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time. Do not take any extra doses.

### POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

The most common and expected side effects with tolvaptan are increased thirst and increased urination during the day and night. Talk to your nephrologist if these symptoms are intolerable for you.

Less common side effects include increased potassium in the blood. This can cause irregular heartbeats, muscle weakness and feeling generally unwell. Other side effects are joint pain, often in the big toe, followed by redness, swelling or warmth. These are signs of increased levels of uric acid in the blood (gout).

A rare side effect is yellowing of the skin or eyes, dark urine, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting or loss of appetite. These are signs of a liver problem. If they occur, you should stop taking tolvaptan and speak with your physician.

### RELATION TO DIET

Timing of food does not affect tolvaptan. You will likely be thirstier on tolvaptan and may notice that you are drinking more water. Stop taking tolvaptan if you are dehydrated or suffer from excessive vomiting, diarrhea or sweating and you cannot drink your normal amount of fluids — contact your doctor if you have to stop taking tolvaptan for more than 2 days. You should avoid eating grapefruit or drinking grapefruit juice while taking tolvaptan as this may significantly increase drug levels in your body.

### MONITORING

You will need to get frequent blood tests while taking tolvaptan to detect any changes in liver function and to prevent serious liver injury. These blood tests need to be done before every refill of tolvaptan. If you are unable to comply with the regular blood work requirement, your pharmacy will not dispense tolvaptan to you.

To allow enough time to process your refill, you should have your blood tests done 1 to 2 weeks before your scheduled refill date.

### WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE TRAVELING OR CANNOT GET BLOOD TESTS FOR OVER 1 MONTH

During the first 18 months you are taking tolvaptan, your physician must review blood tests every month before the pharmacy can dispense tolvaptan. If you are traveling outside of British Columbia for more than 1 month, your scheduled blood test must be arranged at your travel destination and be reviewed by your nephrologist in British Columbia. If these arrangements are made in advance, the pharmacy can then dispense a maximum of 8-weeks of tolvaptan. If you travel for more than 8 weeks, or you are unable to arrange blood tests, you will have to temporarily hold tolvaptan (after your supply is depleted) until you return to British Columbia. Temporarily holding tolvaptan while traveling will not result in any adverse events in the majority of cases.