

Vandetanib tablets (Caprelsa)

Vandetanib is taken once daily. You can swallow the tablet with a drink of water or allow it to disperse in half a glass of plain water.

You can take vandetanib tablets before or after meals.

You will need to have regular check-ups. It is important that you keep the regular appointments with your doctor or hospital.

Let your doctor know about any side-effects of this treatment.

About vandetanib

Type of medicine	An anti-cancer medicine (a protein kinase inhibitor)
Used for	Medullary thyroid cancer
Also called	Caprelsa®
Available as	Tablets

Vandetanib is a medicine which is given to help control the symptoms of [medullary thyroid cancer](#). This is a rare type of cancer that can run in families. The cancer grows from cells in the thyroid gland which make a hormone called calcitonin.

In cancer, certain cells in the body grow and multiply in a way that is 'out of control'. Anti-cancer medicines slow down the way cancer cells grow and spread. Vandetanib belongs to a group of anti-cancer medicines known as protein kinase inhibitors. It works by preventing the cancer from developing blood vessels which it needs in order for it to grow. It may also block signals sent to cancer cells to make them grow.

Before taking vandetanib

Some medicines are not suitable for people with certain conditions, and sometimes a medicine may only be used if extra care is taken. For these reasons, before you start taking vandetanib it is important that your doctor knows:

- If you have an infection or feel particularly unwell.
- If you have an unusual heart rhythm.
- If you have high blood pressure (hypertension).
- If you have any problems with the way your liver works or with the way your kidneys work.
- If you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- If you are taking or using any other medicines. This includes any medicines you are taking which are available to buy without a prescription, as well as herbal and complementary medicines.
- If you have ever had an allergic reaction to a medicine.

How to take vandetanib tablets

- Before you start the treatment, read any printed information you have been given by your doctor and the printed manufacturer's leaflet from inside the pack of tablets. These will give you more information about vandetanib and will provide a full list of the side-effects which you may experience from taking it.
- Vandetanib will be prescribed for you by a specialist doctor who is experienced in treating your condition. It is usual to be prescribed one tablet of 300 mg to take every day, although it may be necessary to reduce the dose if you experience unwanted effects. The directions for taking the tablets will be printed on the label of the pack to remind you what your doctor has told you to do, but if you have any concerns or questions, you should contact your doctor or hospital clinic for further advice.
- You can take the tablet at whatever time of day you find easiest to remember, but try to take your doses at the same time of day, each day. This will help you to avoid missing any doses.

- You can take your doses before or after meals. Swallow the tablet with a drink of water. If you have problems swallowing, you can add the tablet to half a glass of plain drinking water, stirring it gently until it is dissolved. This may take about 10 minutes. Drink the mixture straightaway. Add some more water to your glass and then drink this too – this is to make sure you get the full dose of the medicine.
- If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember unless you are more than 12 hours late. If you are more than 12 hours late, leave out the forgotten dose but remember to take your next tablet at the usual time. Do not take two tablets together to make up for a missed dose.

Getting the most from your treatment

- You must try to keep your regular appointments with your doctor or hospital. This is so your doctor can check on your progress. You will need to have regular check-ups during treatment. Changes in your heart rhythm can occur so your doctor will arrange for you to have regular electrocardiograms (ECGs) to monitor for this.
- You will be given a Patient Alert Card which will explain to you the risks of treatment with vandetanib. Keep this card and show it to anyone who is helping with your care.
- Vandetanib may cause your skin to become more sensitive to sunlight than normal. Wear clothing that will protect the exposed areas of your skin and/or use a sun cream that protects against UVA light and has a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15. Do not use sunbeds.
- If you buy or take any other medicines, check with a pharmacist that they are suitable to take alongside vandetanib. In particular, you should not take any preparations which contain St John's wort (a herbal remedy used for low moods), as it can reduce the effectiveness of vandetanib.
- It is important that you do not get pregnant while you are taking vandetanib (and for several months after the treatment has finished). If this could be a possibility for you, make sure you discuss with your doctor which types of contraception are suitable for you and your partner.

Can vandetanib cause problems?

There are a number of unwanted side-effects of treatment with vandetanib, some of which may be serious or severe in nature. Your doctor will discuss with you the possibility of these occurring and what you should do if you get them. The table below contains some of the most common side-effects. You will find a full list in the manufacturer's information leaflet and the Patient Alert Card supplied with your tablets.

Very common vandetanib side-effects (these affect more than 1 in 10 people)	What can I do if I experience this?
Diarrhoea	You will be prescribed an antidiarrhoeal medicine to help with this. Make sure you drink plenty of water to replace any lost fluids
Headache, blurred vision	If this is associated with any changes in your alertness, let your doctor know straightaway
Feeling sick (nausea) or being sick (vomiting), indigestion, abdominal discomfort	Stick to simple foods - avoid rich or spicy foods. Let your doctor know if it continues
Feeling dizzy or tired	Let your doctor know about this as soon as possible, especially if you also feel faint
Itchy skin rash	Let your doctor know about this as soon as possible - your dose may need adjusting
Infections, lack of appetite, mood changes, problems sleeping, tingling feelings, nail disorders, swollen hands or feet	If troublesome, speak with your doctor
High blood pressure, low blood calcium, heart rhythm changes	Your doctor will regularly check for these

If you experience any other symptoms, speak with your doctor or pharmacist for further advice.

How to store vandetanib

- Keep all medicines out of the reach and sight of children.
- Store in a cool, dry place, away from direct heat and light.
- Please return any unused or unwanted tablets to your clinic or pharmacy to destroy.

Important information about all medicines

Never take more than the prescribed dose. If you suspect that you or someone else might have taken an overdose of this medicine, go to the accident and emergency department of your local hospital. Take the container with you, even if it is empty.

This medicine is for you. Never give it to other people even if their condition appears to be the same as yours.

If you are due to have an operation or dental treatment, always tell the person carrying out the treatment which medicines you are taking.

Do not keep out-of-date or unwanted medicines. Take them to your local pharmacy which will dispose of them for you.

If you have any questions about this medicine ask your pharmacist.

If you experience side effects, you can report them online through the [Yellow Card website](#).

Further reading

- [Manufacturer's PIL, Caprelsa® 100 mg and 300 mg film coated tablets](#); Sanofi Genzyme, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated November 2022.
- [Medicines Complete BNF 87th Edition](#); British Medical Association and Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, London.

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