Letrozole and Ribociclib

What is Letrozole (LET-ruh-zahl) and how does it work?
Letrozole is a type of oral, targeted cancer therapy called an “aromatase inhibitor”. Another name for this medicine is Femara. It is made in a laboratory. This medicine dissolves in your digestive system and gets absorbed into your blood. After menopause, estrogen is made by fat tissue in your body. Letrozole stops your fat tissue from being able to make estrogen. This type of treatment is different from chemotherapy and is also called “endocrine” or “hormone blocking therapy”.

What is Ribociclib (RIB-o-si-clib) and how does it work?
Ribociclib is a type of oral, targeted cancer therapy called a “cyclin D kinase inhibitor.” Another name for this medicine is Kisqali. It is made in a laboratory. This medicine dissolves in your digestive system and gets absorbed into your blood. Once inside cancer cells, Ribociclib can prevent cells from dividing and making new cancer cells.

Why am I getting 2 treatment medicines for my cancer?
This treatment is used for postmenopausal women with estrogen receptor (ER)-positive, advanced breast cancer. These 2 medicines work together to stop the growth of cancer cells. Giving the 2 medicines together makes your treatment more effective.

What should I tell my doctor before starting this treatment?
Talk to your doctor about the following:
• If you have ever had liver or kidney problems.
• If you have ever had changes in your heartbeat or other heart problems.
• If you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant. Your doctor will talk with you about birth control to use when you take these medicines.
• If you are breastfeeding.
• If you have been told that you need to start a new medicine.
• The medicines/pills you take, including:
  ▶ Medicines ordered by any of your doctors
  ▶ Herbs
  ▶ Vitamins
  ▶ Over-the-counter medicines

**How does my doctor decide my treatment dose?**

To determine your treatment dose, your doctor will review the following: your white blood cell counts, your medicines, how well your liver and kidneys work and any other health problems you have.

**How do I handle, store and dispose of these drugs?**

• **There are special safe handling instructions for this medicine.** Talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse about the precautions you need to follow when you take this medicine at home.
• Store these medicines at room temperature, away from heat, moisture, and direct light. **Do not** store in your bathroom or refrigerator.
• Keep these medicines away from children and **do not** share it with anyone.
• **Ribociclib** comes from the pharmacy in individually wrapped containers.

**Disposal:**

Talk with your doctor or pharmacist about how to get rid of prescription medicines safely.
How do I take Letrozole?

- Your dose is 2.5 mg (one tablet). Take this medicine every day, on Days 1 to 28 of the cycle.
- Take this medicine once a day around the same time every morning.
- Swallow the tablet whole with a full glass of water, with or without food.
- If you miss a dose by more than 6 hours, wait until it is time for your next dose, and skip the missed dose. Do not double up on doses.
- Do not take another dose if you vomit.

How do I take Ribociclib?

- Do not crush, break, chew or open the tablet.
- See your prescription label for how many tablets to take each day and how often.
- There is a check (√) in the box by your dose of Ribociclib:
  - 600 mg (3 tablets)
  - 400 mg (2 tablets)
  - 200 mg (1 tablet)
- One “cycle” is 4 weeks (28 days):
  ▶ On Days 1 to 21 (first 3 weeks of the cycle), take your dose of Ribociclib one time each day. Take this medicine around the same time every morning.
  ▶ On Days 22 to 28 (last week of the cycle), do not take any Ribociclib.
- Swallow the tablet whole with a full glass of water, with or without food.
- It is safe to take Letrozole and Ribociclib at the same time.
- If you miss a dose by more than 6 hours, wait until it is time for your next dose, and skip the missed dose. Do not double up on doses.
- Do not take another dose if you vomit.
- Your doctor may change your dose in the future to find out what works best for you. Taking a lower dose of Ribociclib does not mean the medicine will not work.
What are the side effects of this treatment?

Every person responds differently to treatment. Here is information about the side effects for each medicine.

You may have any of the following with **Ribociclib**:

**Most common side effects**
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Fatigue or weakness
- Diarrhea
- Constipation
- Low white blood cell counts (can increase your risk of infection)
- Low red blood cell counts (can lead to tiredness and weakness)
- Hair thinning
- Headache

**Less common side effects**
- Low platelet counts (can lead to easy bruising and bleeding)
- Decreased appetite
- Nosebleeds
- Infection
- Mouth sores
- Rash
- Itching
- Decrease in liver function. Your doctor will check how well your liver works before each treatment.

You may have any of the following with **Letrozole**:
- New cough or shortness of breath
- Headache, joint or muscle pains
- Hot flashes
- Menopause symptoms including fatigue, mood changes, depression, discomfort with intercourse or loss of interest in sex
- Vaginal changes including dryness, skin irritation and urinary tract infections
- Osteoporosis (decrease in bone density)
- Changes in your cholesterol or triglyceride levels
- Thinning of your hair
When should I call my doctor?

You should call your doctor right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or higher

  **A fever can be life-threatening if not treated. Your doctor may ask you to go to the hospital.**

- Open sores on your tongue or in your mouth
- Nausea that makes you unable to eat or drink
- Diarrhea (4 or more loose stools in 24 hours) or diarrhea at night
- Shortness of breath, trouble breathing or cough that bothers you or will not go away
- Chills, sore throat, cough or a wound that does not get better
- Bleeding or bruising, including bloody or black stools or blood in your urine
- Changes in your heartbeat

Is there anything else I should know about this treatment?

- Ribociclib may cause changes in your blood counts. Your doctor will check your blood counts at the start of your treatment, every 2 weeks for the first 2 months and then once a month.

- Ribociclib may cause changes in your heartbeat. Your doctor may order a test to check your heart before you start this medicine and at times during your treatment.

- **Do not eat or drink grapefruit, grapefruit juice, Seville oranges or star fruit.** This can increase your risk of side effects.

- This treatment may make it harder for your body to fight infections. Wash your hands often and stay away from people who are sick.

- Unless told otherwise, drink 8 to 10 cups of non-caffeinated fluid each day to stay hydrated.

Go to this video link: [http://cancer.osu.edu/patientedvideos](http://cancer.osu.edu/patientedvideos) to learn more about your cancer diagnosis, treatment and care.