

Thalidomide (Thalomid)

Here is important information on how to use, handle, and store your medicine, what side effects to look for and how to manage them.

What it looks like: White, tan or blue capsules

How to handle and store:

- **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.
- **Caregivers who are or may become pregnant should NOT touch this medicine.**
- Store in a closed container in a dry place such as a cabinet away from light, heat and moisture.
- **Do not** store in your bathroom or refrigerator.
- Keep this medicine away from children and **do not** share it with anyone.

How to take:

- Swallow the capsule whole with a full glass of water each day. Take this medicine at bedtime, at least 1 hour after you eat.
- **Do not** take more capsules than ordered by your doctor.
- **Do not** crush, break, chew or open the capsules.
- If you miss a dose, wait until it is time for your next dose, and skip the missed dose. **Do not double up on doses.**
- Use a calendar or diary to keep track of what days and what times you take this medicine.

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

Disposal:

- Talk with your doctor or pharmacist about how to get rid of prescription medicines safely.

Precautions:

- Let your doctor know if you have had recent surgery, trauma or infection.
- Tell your doctor or pharmacist about any medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins and herbal products.
- **Do not get pregnant while taking this medicine.** Talk with your doctor about what birth control to use.

Thalomid REMS Program for Patients:

Program for Thalomid Education and Prescribing Safety

- You, your doctor and your pharmacy must register with **Thalomid** REMS program before you can receive your medicine.
- You are allowed a 28-day supply of this medicine.
- You will need to call Bristol Myers Squibb at 1-888-423-5436 each month for a confidential survey.

Possible Side Effects

You can find more information on side effects in the Patient Education booklet, *Treatment with Chemotherapy and Anti-Cancer Medicines*.

Birth Defects

What this means: There is a known risk of birth defects in an unborn baby if either parent is taking this medicine.

What to do:

- Your doctor will talk to you about what birth control to use during treatment and for 1 month after you take your last dose.
- Women who take this medicine may be asked to take a pregnancy test each month to confirm they are not pregnant.

Sedation

What this means: You may be drowsy or more tired than usual.

What to do:

- **Do not** do activities where drowsiness may be a problem, such as driving or working.
- **Do not** use alcohol. Alcohol can increase your drowsiness.
- Take this medicine at bedtime.
- Tell your doctor if your drowsiness makes you unable to do your daily activities.

Neuropathy

What this means: You may have tingling, numbness or burning pain in your fingers and/or feet. You may be unsteady when you walk.

What to do:

- Call your doctor if this makes you unable to do your daily activities.

Blood Clots

What this means: You may be at risk for blood clots. Your doctor may tell you to take a medicine, such as aspirin to decrease this risk.

What to do:

Call your doctor if you have:

- Swelling in one arm or leg with or without pain.
- Sudden chest pain, shortness of breath, or changes in heartbeat.
- Sudden or severe headaches.
- Problems with your vision, speech or ability to walk.
- Numbness or weakness in your arms and legs or on one side of your body.

Smoking may increase your risk of blood clots. It is important to talk to your doctor about options to quit.

Constipation

What this means: You may have changes in how often you have bowel movements.

What to do:

- Drink plenty of water during the day.
- Eat foods that are high in fiber.
- Talk to your doctor about using stool softeners and laxatives.
- Call your doctor if you do not have a bowel movement for 2 days or become uncomfortable because you are unable to have a bowel movement.

Other Side Effects: rash, tremor

- Call doctor or nurse practitioner if you have any problems.

This is not a complete list of all possible side effects. Tell your doctor if you have these or any other side effects that you think are caused by this medicine. Your James health care team can give you other tips for how to manage your side effects.