



Provincial Health Services Authority

## For the Patient: LUAVGEFF

Other Names: First-line Treatment for Epidermal Growth Factor Receptor (EGFR) Mutation-Positive Patients with Advanced Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer (NSCLC) with Gefitinib

**LU = LU**ng  
**AV = AdV**anced  
**GEF = GEF**itinib  
**F = First**-line

### **ABOUT THIS MEDICATION**

#### **What is this drug used for?**

Gefitinib is a drug given to treat Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer. It is a tablet which is taken by mouth.

#### **How does this drug work?**

Gefitinib works by interfering with certain enzymes called tyrosine kinases that are important in transmitting the chemical signals needed for essential processes like cell division and replication in cancer cells.

### **INTENDED BENEFITS**

This treatment is being given to slow down the growth of cancer cells in your body. This treatment can help with controlling some of the symptoms the cancer may be causing and may delay or prevent new symptoms from starting.

### **LUAVGEFF TREATMENT SUMMARY**

#### **How is this drug given?**

- Gefitinib is taken once a day, continuously, as long as you are benefiting from treatment and not having too many side effects.
- Gefitinib should be swallowed whole with a glass of water, and can be taken with food or on an empty stomach.

#### **What will happen when I get the drug?**

- A blood test is done within one month of starting treatment.
- A blood test is also done two weeks after starting treatment and each time you see your oncologist.
- The dose and timing of your chemotherapy may be changed based on your blood test results and/or other side effects.

### **CHEMOTHERAPY SIDE EFFECTS AND MANAGEMENT:**

- Your oncologist will review the risks of treatment and possible side effects with you before starting treatment.
- The pharmacist will review how to take the medication and possible side effects with you on the day you first pick up your medication.

- Unexpected and unlikely side effects can occur with any drug treatment. *The ones listed below are particularly important for you to be aware of.* Please refer to the patient information handout entitled “**For the Patient: Gefitinib**” for a complete list of possible side effects and their management.

SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS	How Common Is It?	MANAGEMENT
<b>Lung problems</b>	Rare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lung problems such as difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, increased coughing, fever or chest pain may occur with gefitinib.</li> <li>• If you have signs of lung problems that are <i>new</i> or suddenly <i>getting worse</i>, stop taking gefitinib and contact your oncologist immediately.</li> </ul>
<b>Liver failure</b>	Uncommon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular blood tests will be done throughout your treatment to monitor your liver function.</li> <li>• See your oncologist as soon as possible if you have signs of liver problems such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-colored stools.</li> </ul>

OTHER SIDE EFFECTS	How Common Is It?	MANAGEMENT
Skin reactions such as <b>rash, dryness, or itchiness</b> are common.	Very common	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moisturizing creams can help prevent or reduce skin dryness.</li> <li>• If skin reactions persist or get worse contact your oncologist.</li> </ul>
<b>Diarrhea</b> can occur.	Very common	<p>To help diarrhea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink plenty of liquids.</li> <li>• Eat and drink often in small amounts.</li> <li>• Avoid high fibre foods as outlined in <i>Food Ideas to Help with Diarrhea During Chemotherapy</i>.*</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> If lactose in milk usually gives you diarrhea, the lactose in the tablet may be causing your diarrhea. Take LACTAID® just before your gefitinib dose.</p>

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PATIENT**

### **What other drugs can interact with LUAVGEFF?**

- Other drugs such as itraconazole (SPORANOX®), rifampin, warfarin (COUMADIN®), and some stomach medications such as ranitidine (ZANTAC®) may *interact* with gefitinib. Tell your doctor if you are taking these or any other drugs as you may need extra blood tests, your dose may need to be changed or your treatment may need to be held for a few days.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start taking any new prescription or non-prescription drugs.

### **Other important things to know:**

- Avoid **grapefruit** and **grapefruit juice** as these may interact with gefitinib.
- The drinking of alcohol (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of this treatment.
- Gefitinib may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use *birth control* while you are being treated with gefitinib. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breast feed during treatment.
- Tell all doctors or dentists you see that you are being treated with gefitinib before you receive any treatment from them.

**If you experience symptoms or changes in your body that have not been described in “*For the Patient: Gefitinib*” but worry you, or if any symptoms are severe, contact:**  
\_\_\_\_\_ at telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_