



BC Cancer Agency

For the Patient: SAAVGS

Other Names: Second Line Treatment of Advanced C-kit Positive Gastrointestinal Stromal Cell Tumours (GIST's) After Imatinib Using Sunitinib (SUTENT®)

SA = **SA**rcoma (tumour group)
AVG = **AdV**anced **GIST**
S = **S**unitinib

ABOUT THIS MEDICATION

What is this drug used for?

- Sunitinib (soo-NI-ti-nib) is an oral drug treatment given as therapy to treat advanced gastrointestinal stromal tumour (GIST). It is usually given after the disease worsened while taking another medicine called imatinib or when imatinib cannot be taken.

How do these drugs work?

- Sunitinib works by interfering with certain enzymes called tyrosine kinases that are important in transmitting the chemical signals needed for essential processes in the cells. It prevents the growth of blood vessels from surrounding tissue to a cancer, and prevents the increase in the number of cancer cells.

INTENDED BENEFITS

- This drug is being given to destroy and/or limit the growth of cancer cells in your body. This treatment may improve your current symptoms, and delay or prevent the onset of new symptoms.
- It may take several treatments before your doctor can judge whether or not this medicine is helping.

TREATMENT SUMMARY

How are these drugs given?

- This medication is given as one dose every day for 28 days (i.e., 4 weeks), followed by 14 days (2 weeks) off, and then repeated again. The days when you are taking this medication, together with the days-off after it, may be referred to as a “cycle”. Therefore, sunitinib is given as a 6-week cycle.
- Sometimes, Sunitinib may also be given at a lower dose every day with no days-off.
- Sunitinib is a capsule which is taken by mouth.

What will happen when I get my drugs?

- A blood test is done each cycle, on or about the day before each treatment. The dose and timing of your treatment may be changed based on your blood counts and/or other side effects.
- The doctor will review the results of the blood test and meet with you each cycle.

SIDE EFFECTS AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM

The doctor will review the risks of treatment and possible side effects with you before starting treatment. The nurse will review these with you on the day of your treatment. If you haven't already received a copy, please ask for "*Information for the Patient: sunitinib*". It is also located on our website at:

www.bccancer.bc.ca/HPI/DrugDatabase/DrugIndexPt/sunitinib

It is important that you measure your blood pressure frequently at home, in particular in the beginning of your treatment (especially in the first 2 cycles of therapy). Keep a journal of your daily measured blood pressure to submit to your physician with your next visit. The reason for this is that Sunitib can cause increased blood pressure very quickly after initiation of therapy.

BCCA Pharmacists are also available to answer your drug-related questions.

Medication Interactions

Some drugs may **interact** with sunitinib and you may need extra blood tests or your doses may need to be changed. See "*Information for the Patient: sunitinib*".