

**For the Patient: SAAJGI**

Other names: Adjuvant therapy of patients with high risk Gastrointestinal stromal tumours with Imatinib (STI-571, GLEEVEC®, GLIVEC®)

**SA = SA**corma (tumour group)

**AJG = AdJ**uvant GIST

**I = I**matinib

**ABOUT THIS MEDICATION****What is this drug used for?**

- **Imatinib** (i-MAT-in-ib) is a oral drug treatment that is used to treat advanced gastrointestinal tumours (GIST) and that has been shown to reduce the relapse rate for patients newly diagnosed with tumours that have been operated on for cure but who are a high risk of recurrence. It is also used to treat some types of blood disease.

**How do these drugs work?**

- Imatinib works by interfering with certain enzymes called tyrosine kinases that are important in transmitting the chemical signals needed for essential processes in the cancer cells. It prevents the increase in the number of cancer cells.

**INTENDED BENEFITS**

- To reduce the chance growth of cancer cells that may be remaining after surgery

**TREATMENT SUMMARY****How are these drugs given?**

- This medication is given as one dose every day for three years.
- Sometimes, the dose may be changed if you are having too many side effects.
- Imatinib is a capsule which is taken by mouth.

**What will happen when I get my drugs?**

- **Blood tests** will be taken regularly. The dose of your imatinib may be changed based on the test results and/or other side effects.

## **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: imatinib*". It is also located on our website at:

<http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/HPI/DrugDatabase/DrugIndexPt/Imatinib.htm>

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

### **Medication Interactions**

Some drugs may **interact** with Imatinib and you may need extra blood tests or your doses may need to be changed.

Warfarin's blood thinning effect may be increased. Blood tests for monitoring warfarin's effectiveness needs to be done more frequently during the start of imatinib treatment and at imatinib dose changes.

See "*Information for the Patient: imatinib*".