Regorafenib biotherapy guide

For patients with colorectal cancer
# Table of contents

Your health care team .................................................. 3

What is targeted biotherapy? ........................................... 4

What should I discuss with my doctor before starting treatment? ................................................................. 5

What is regorafenib? ....................................................... 9

How should I prepare for treatment? ......................... 9

Important information about regorafenib .......... 10

What can I expect during my treatment? ........... 11

What are the common side effects of regorafenib treatment? ................................................................. 12

How do I manage common side effects? ........ 13

Where can I get support? .............................................. 24
Your health care team

Oncologist: 
__________________________________________

Pharmacist: 
__________________________________________

Nurse: 
__________________________________________

Dietitian: 
__________________________________________

Social worker: 
__________________________________________

Medical Day Care: 416-864-5222

2 Donnelly Nursing Unit: 416-864-5099
What is targeted biotherapy?

Targeted therapies are a type of treatment for specific cancers. Unlike chemotherapy, targeted therapies act more on cancer cells than quickly dividing normal cells. Your oncologist (cancer doctor) has already identified if the type of cancer you have has the target for these therapies to work. Regorafenib is a targeted therapy.

How does it work?

Targeted therapies interfere with specific proteins that are common in certain cancers or proteins that help cancers grow. Targeted therapies slow or stop the growth of cancer cells.
What should I discuss with my doctor before starting treatment?

Your health history

- Tell your oncologist (cancer doctor) about any other health problems you have or had. Some health problems may affect the outcomes with this treatment.

- Tell other healthcare professionals you are seeing about the type of biotherapy you are having.

Vaccines, surgery, dental work

- You should have all your dental work done before you start your treatment.

- Check with your oncologist before you have any vaccines, surgery or dental treatment.
Other medicines, herbs and supplements

• Tell your oncologist, nurse, pharmacist and dietitian about any over the counter, herbal or doctor-prescribed medicines you are taking.

• Check with your oncologist, chemotherapy nurse, pharmacist or dietitian before you start taking any new drugs, including herbal or alternative treatments.

• Tell your oncologist if you are taking ASA (Aspirin®, ibuprofen (Advil® or Motrin®), naproxen (Aleve®), acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or blood thinners.
Birth control

• Women who have not yet reached menopause should take steps to avoid getting pregnant while being treated with this drug.

• You or your partner should not get pregnant during your treatment. Biotherapy can harm your baby.

• Talk to your oncologist about what kind of birth control and protection you should use.

Pregnancy and fertility

• If you want to have children, speak to your oncologist before starting your first treatment. Treatment may affect your chances of having a baby in the future.

• Tell your oncologist as soon as possible if you or your partner does become pregnant.
Breastfeeding

- If you have a baby, do not breastfeed while being treated with regorafenib. Ask your oncologist how long you should wait to breastfeed after you have finished your last treatment.

Ask your chemotherapy nurse, pharmacist or oncologist if you have any questions.
What is regorafenib?

Regorafenib is a drug used to treat colorectal cancer. It comes as a pill that you swallow. Depending on your dose, you may need to take more than 1 pill at a time. One cycle of regorafenib treatment is 4 weeks long (28 days). You will take regorafenib for 21 days, followed by 6 to 7 days of not taking regorafenib.

How should I prepare for treatment?

Think about where you can store your biotherapy drug at home. Store it away from heat, light and moisture and keep it out of reach of children.

Once you open the bottle, the tablets must be used within 28 days. Return any pills you do not use to your pharmacy.

While being treated, do not eat grapefruit, pomelo (chinese white grapefruit), starfruit or seville oranges. Do not drink juice from these fruits, or eat anything made with them. These fruits could make your side effects worse.
Important information about regorafenib

You must take regorafenib pills **exactly** how your oncologist tells you to. You may need to take more than 1 pill at the same time to make up the right dose.

If you forget to take a dose of regorafenib, skip that dose and take your next dose when it is due. **Do not** take 2 doses at once. If you miss a dose, tell your oncologist at your next appointment.

It is dangerous to take 2 doses at one time. If you do take too many pills or doses call your oncologist and go to the emergency department **right away**.
What can I expect during my treatment?

On the day of your treatment you will come to the Medical Day Care Unit

1. You will have a blood test before each cycle of treatment to check your blood counts. Low blood counts can mean your body will not be able to handle another biotherapy treatment and your dose may be delayed.

2. Your doctor will give you a prescription for regorafenib. Take that prescription to your pharmacy to get the medicine.

3. Once regorafenib is available for you from the pharmacy, you will start taking the pills. Be sure to take the pills exactly how your oncologist told you to. Take your pills with a glass of water after eating a low-fat meal.

4. You will take regorafenib for 21 days. Then you will have 6 or 7 days off.

5. On day 1 of your next cycle, you will return to the Medical Day Care Unit to be considered for your next treatment.
What are the common side effects of regorafenib treatment?

Regorafenib has different effects on different people. The effects you may have depend on many factors.

- Tiredness and weakness
- Hand and foot skin reaction
- Diarrhea (loose stools)
- Unusual bleeding or bruising
- Infection
- Headache, muscle and joint pain
- Rash or dry, itchy skin
- Lip and mouth sores
- High blood pressure
- Salt imbalances and liver problems
How do I manage common side effects?

Tiredness and weakness

Feeling tired and weak is most common after the first 7 days of each cycle. It may get worse with each treatment.

It may take a few months for the tiredness to go away even after your treatment has ended. Your energy level will improve over time.

Low red blood cell levels can also make you feel tired. During treatment your oncologist will do blood work to monitor your red blood cells.

What you can do

- Eat well-balanced meals.
- Do mild exercise such as walking.
- Be sure to rest well when you need to.

Call your oncologist or nurse if you

- Have shortness of breath
- Fall and hurt yourself
- Feel dizzy when walking or when getting up out of bed
**Hand and foot skin reaction**

Your palms and the soles of your feet may start to become tender and red. You might feel numbness and tingling. It may be painful and you could get blisters.

**What you can do**

- Treat your skin to prevent hand and foot skin reactions. Use a good quality moisturizing cream (such as Lubriderm® or A&D Ointment®). Try to moisturize at least 3 times a day.

- Avoid hot baths or showers.

- Avoid activities that may dry your skin.

- Rest often and keep off your feet.

- Wear loose footwear and clothing.

If your hands and feet become red or tender, tell your oncologist at your next visit.

**When to get help**

Call your oncologist if you have blisters, wounds or severe swelling on your hands or feet.
Diarrhea (loose stools)

What you can do

• You may take loperamide (Imodium®) if you have diarrhea. Ask your doctor about the right dose for you. The amount you need may be more than the amount on the package.

• Drink plenty of fluids.

• Eat and drink small amounts often.

• Avoid high-fibre foods.

When to get help

Go to the emergency department or contact your oncologist if you have

• Severe watery diarrhea (more than 5 times in a day)

• Watery stools that last longer than 24 hours, even though you are taking Imodium®
**Bruising, bleeding or red spots on skin**

Platelets help form blood clots so you will stop bleeding if you are cut or bruised. Regorafenib can cause you to have a low platelet count. This means you could bleed more easily.

If you have black or bloody stools, you are bleeding from your stomach, intestines or colon.

**Do not** take Aspirin®, ibuprofen (Advil® or Motrin®) or new medicines (herbal or traditional) without speaking to your doctor.

**What you can do**

- Be careful when you use sharp objects so you do not harm your skin.

- Use a soft toothbrush to avoid bleeding or bruising in your mouth. Tell your doctor before you have any dental treatment.

**When to get help**

Go to the closest emergency department if you have bleeding or bruising that is unusual or will not stop.
Infection

The risk of infection is greatest 7 to 10 days after each treatment. The number of white blood cells that fight infection will be lowered with each treatment. This means your body will be more prone to illness.

Signs of infection

• Severe cough, sore throat
• Chills
• Fever
• Burning when urinating (peeing) or urinating too often
• Open wound that appears red or swollen

What you can do

• Keep a thermometer at home and take your temperature.

• Limit contact with people who are sick or have colds.

• Wash your hands often to lower your chances of getting sick.
When to get help

Go to the closest emergency department **right away** if

- Your temperature is above 38° Celsius or 100.4° Fahrenheit for more than 1 hour

or

- You have a temperature of more than 38.3° Celsius or 100.9° Fahrenheit

Tell the emergency department that you are receiving biotherapy treatment.
Headaches, joint and muscle pain

You might get headaches, muscle aches and joint pains after each treatment. This may last for a few days.

What you can do

• Take any prescribed medicine for pain and follow your doctor or pharmacist's instructions.

• If your doctor did not give you painkillers you can get acetaminophen (Tylenol®) over the counter. Ask your doctor the right dose for you.

• Talk to your doctor if you are thinking of taking ibuprofen (Advil®), naproxen (Aleve®) or ASA (Aspirin®). These medicines may increase your risk of bleeding.

• Rest when you need to.

• Try doing light exercise.
Rash—dry itchy skin

What you can do

- Use daily moisturizer.
- Wear SPF 30, PABA-free sunscreen with UVA and UVB protection.

When to get help

Call your doctor or nurse if your rash:

- Starts to blister
- Spreads all over (on your face, neck, chest, back, arms and legs)
- Becomes severe
Lip or mouth sores

You may notice lip or mouth sores a few days after each treatment. They can last from a few days to weeks. You might get sores on your tongue, gums, lips, sides of the mouth or in your throat.

What you can do

- Keep your mouth clean. Brush your teeth and tongue often and use a soft toothbrush.
- Rinse your mouth 3 times each day with ½ teaspoon of baking soda in a glass of water, soda water or mineral water.
- Avoid mouthwashes with alcohol in them, such as Listerine® and Scope®. They will make your mouth sores worse.
- Avoid hot, spicy and acidic foods like hot peppers, tomato sauce, lemon juice or oranges.
- Tell your doctor if you are having trouble eating or drinking.
When to get help

You may get a white film on your tongue. If this happens, tell your doctor. You may need medicine to treat it.

Call your doctor or nurse if you

• Have difficulty swallowing
• Cannot eat for more than 48 hours
• Have excessive bleeding from your mouth or gums that lasts for hours
High blood pressure

What you can do

• Keep track of your blood pressure. Take your blood pressure regularly at home or at the pharmacy.

• Your oncologist may prescribe medicine to control your blood pressure.

Salt imbalances or liver problems

Call your doctor right away if

• You notice your eyes or skin are yellow

• Your urine is unusually dark

• You have severe muscle weakness and cramping and notice that your heartbeat is not regular
Where can I get support?

Wellspring: A lifeline to cancer support

Wellspring programs are open to individuals diagnosed with any type of cancer and caregivers who are coping at any stage in the cancer journey. Various programs are available including individual and group support, coping skills, expressive therapies, educational workshops and presentations, and cancer rehab programs. There is no cost for these services.

Wellspring Downtown Toronto (Office)
4 Charles Street East, Suite 300
Toronto, Ontario
M4Y 1T1
416-961-1928

Westerkirk House at Sunnybrook
105 Wellness Way
Toronto, Ontario
M4N 3M5
www.wellspring.ca
416-480-4440
Gilda’s Club Greater Toronto

Gilda’s Club Greater Toronto provides support, networking, educational and arts sessions.

Support groups are available for the entire family. They are for parents, youth, children, cancer survivors and individuals who are coping with the loss of someone to cancer. Networking groups give participants the opportunity to come together and share different interests and experiences from their unique situations.

Educational sessions help participants to learn new skills and information in order to guide them through their cancer journey. Arts programming encourages personal expression, self reflection and participation in arts events in Toronto.

Gilda’s Club Greater Toronto
24 Cecil Street
Toronto, Ontario
M5T 1N2
www.gildasclubtoronto.org
416-214-9898
**Look Good, Feel Better**

This program offers a free two-hour workshop for women whose appearance has been affected by cancer and cancer treatment. The workshop helps women learn how to look and feel a little more like themselves again. Guided by experts through the Signature Steps, women master simple cosmetic techniques, explore hair alternatives and learn about cosmetic hygiene, nail and skin care. Participants take home a complimentary kit of cosmetics and personal care products that are generously donated by the member companies of the Canadian Cosmetic Toiletry and Fragrance Association.

Some workshop are hosted in hospitals. Please see the following website for more information:

Look Good, Feel Better
www/lgfb.com
905-890-5161
Cleaning for a Reason

Women undergoing treatment for any type of cancer can receive professional house cleaning services. In collaboration with Heart and Soul, Cleaning for a Reason is a non-profit organization serving the United States and Canada. Services include 4 free cleanings. One cleaning per month.

Cleaning for a Reason
www.cleaningforareason.org
1-877-337-3348

Cottage Dreams

Cottage Dreams is a program to help families touched by cancer enjoy time together at a private, donated cottage. Families only pay a non-refundable application fee of about $100 for a one-week getaway. Please consult the website for more information. The program is offered from June to December of every year.

Cottage Dreams
www.cottagedreams.ca
705-457-9100
Princess Margaret Hospital Lodge: free new and used wigs

If you are experiencing hair loss, you may wish to buy a head covering. The Princess Margaret Hospital Lodge provides free wigs for those who wish to use one.

Princess Margaret Hospital Lodge
545 Jarvis Street, Room B-59
Toronto, Ontario
M4Y 2H7
416-413-7412

Nanny Angel Network

You can get professional childcare at no cost through this network. Services are for mothers diagnosed with breast cancer, in treatment or in the early stages of recovery. Nanny Angel volunteers provide childcare while mothers attend appointments or simply choose to rest.

1000 Sheppard Ave. West, Suite 100
Toronto, Ontario
M3H 2T6
www.nannyangelnetwork.com
416-730-0025
St. Michael’s cares about your health. For reliable health information, visit our Patient and Family Learning Centre, or find us online at www.stmichaelshospital.com/learn

This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Ask your healthcare provider about this information if you have questions.

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Inspiring Science.

30 Bond Street, Toronto, ON M5B 1W8 Canada
416.864.6060 stmichaelshospital.com

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