

# PATIENT INFORMATION

## ALIMTA<sup>®</sup> (uh-LIM-tuh)

### (pemetrexed for injection)

Read the Patient Information that comes with ALIMTA before you start treatment and each time you get treated with ALIMTA. There may be new information. This leaflet does not take the place of talking to your doctor about your medical condition or treatment. Talk to your doctor if you have any questions about ALIMTA.

#### What is ALIMTA?

ALIMTA is a treatment for:

- **Malignant pleural mesothelioma.** This cancer affects the inside lining of the chest cavity. ALIMTA is given with cisplatin, another anti-cancer medicine (chemotherapy).
- **Nonsquamous non-small cell lung cancer.** This cancer is a disease in which malignant (cancer) cells form in the tissues of the lung. If you are having initial treatment for your lung cancer, ALIMTA may be given alone or in combination with another chemotherapy drug. If this is the first time you have been treated for your lung cancer, ALIMTA may be given with another anti-cancer drug called cisplatin. If you have completed initial treatment for your lung cancer, ALIMTA may be given alone immediately following your initial treatment. If you are being treated because your cancer has come back or you had trouble tolerating a prior treatment, ALIMTA may be given alone. Your doctor will speak to you about whether ALIMTA is appropriate for your specific type of non-small cell lung cancer.

**To lower your chances of side effects of ALIMTA, you must also take folic acid and vitamin B<sub>12</sub> prior to and during your treatment with ALIMTA.** Your doctor will prescribe a medicine called a “corticosteroid” to take for 3 days during your treatment with ALIMTA.

In children, ALIMTA has not been shown to be effective. No important differences in side effects were seen in children compared to adults (see “**What are the possible side effects of ALIMTA?**”).

#### What should I tell my doctor before taking ALIMTA?

Tell your doctor about all of your medical conditions, including if you:

- **are pregnant or planning to become pregnant.** ALIMTA may harm your unborn baby.
- **are breastfeeding.** It is not known if ALIMTA passes into breast milk. You should stop breastfeeding once you start treatment with ALIMTA.
- **are taking other medicines,** including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. ALIMTA and other medicines may affect each other causing serious side effects. Especially, tell your doctor if you are taking medicines called “nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs” (NSAIDs) for pain or swelling. There are many NSAID medicines. If you are not sure, ask your doctor or pharmacist if any of your medicines are NSAIDs.

#### How is ALIMTA given?

- ALIMTA is slowly infused (injected) into a vein. The injection or infusion will last about 10 minutes. You will usually receive ALIMTA once every 21 days (3 weeks).
- If you are being treated with ALIMTA and cisplatin for the initial treatment of either mesothelioma or non-small cell lung cancer, ALIMTA will be given first as a 10 minute infusion into your vein and cisplatin (another anti-cancer drug) will also be given through your vein starting about 30 minutes after ALIMTA and ending about 2 hours later.
- If you have completed initial treatment for your non-small cell lung cancer, you may receive ALIMTA alone, given as a 10 minute infusion into your vein.

- If you are being treated because your non-small cell lung cancer has returned, you may receive ALIMTA alone, given as a 10 minute infusion into your vein.
- Your doctor will prescribe a medicine called a “corticosteroid” to take for 3 days during your treatment with ALIMTA.
- **It is very important to take folic acid and vitamin B<sub>12</sub> during your treatment with ALIMTA to lower your chances of harmful side effects.** You must start taking 400-1000 micrograms of folic acid every day for at least 5 days out of the 7 days before your first dose of ALIMTA. You must keep taking folic acid every day during the time you are getting treatment with ALIMTA and for 21 days after your last treatment. You can get folic acid vitamins over-the-counter. Folic acid is also found in many multivitamin pills. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for help if you are not sure how to choose a folic acid product. Your doctor will give you vitamin B<sub>12</sub> injections while you are getting treatment with ALIMTA. You will get your first vitamin B<sub>12</sub> injection during the week before your first dose of ALIMTA, and then about every 9 weeks during treatment.
- You will have regular blood tests before and during your treatment with ALIMTA. Your doctor may adjust your dose of ALIMTA or delay treatment based on the results of your blood tests and on your general condition.

### What should I avoid while taking ALIMTA?

- **Women who can become pregnant should not become pregnant during treatment with ALIMTA.** ALIMTA may harm the unborn baby.
- **Ask your doctor before taking medicines called NSAIDs.** There are many NSAID medicines. If you are not sure, ask your doctor or pharmacist if any of your medicines are NSAIDs.

### What are the possible side effects of ALIMTA?

Most patients taking ALIMTA will have side effects. Sometimes it is not always possible to tell whether ALIMTA, another medicine, or the cancer itself is causing these side effects. **Call your doctor right away if you have a fever, chills, diarrhea, or mouth sores.** These symptoms could mean you have an infection which may be severe and could lead to death.

The most common side effects of ALIMTA when given alone or in combination with cisplatin are:

- **Stomach upset, including nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.** You can obtain medicines to help control some of these symptoms. Call your doctor if you get any of these symptoms.
- **Low blood cell counts:**
  - **Low red blood cells.** Low red blood cells may make you feel tired, get tired easily, appear pale, and become short of breath.
  - **Low white blood cells.** Low white blood cells may give you a greater chance for infection. If you have a fever (temperature above 100.4°F) or other signs of infection, call your doctor right away.
  - **Low platelets.** Low platelets give you a greater chance for bleeding. Your doctor will do blood tests to check your blood counts before and during treatment with ALIMTA.
- **Tiredness.** You may feel tired or weak for a few days after your ALIMTA treatments. If you have severe weakness or tiredness, call your doctor.
- **Redness or sores in your mouth, throat, on your lips, or in the tube that connects your throat and stomach (esophagus).** Redness and sores may begin a few days after your ALIMTA treatment. Call your doctor if this happens, or if you have pain or trouble drinking or swallowing food.
- **Loss of appetite.** You may lose your appetite and lose weight during your treatment. Talk to your doctor if this is a problem for you.

- **Rash.** You may get a rash or itching during treatment. These reactions usually appear between treatments with ALIMTA and usually go away before the next treatment. Skin reactions or rashes that include blistering or peeling may be severe and could lead to death. Call your doctor if you have any of these symptoms.

Talk with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about any side effect that bothers you or that doesn't go away.

These are not all the side effects of ALIMTA. For more information, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

### **General information about ALIMTA**

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for conditions other than those listed in patient information leaflets. ALIMTA was prescribed for your medical condition.

This leaflet summarizes the most important information about ALIMTA. If you would like more information, talk with your doctor. You can ask your doctor or pharmacist for information about ALIMTA that is written for health professionals. You can also call 1-800-LILLY-RX (1-800-545-5979) or visit [www.ALIMTA.com](http://www.ALIMTA.com).

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**[www.ALIMTA.com](http://www.ALIMTA.com)**

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