Pirfenidone (Esbriet)

Information for patients

Read this medicine fact sheet to learn about:

- What this medicine is
- Who it is for
- How to take it
- What side effects to watch for

What is pirfenidone?

Pirfenidone [peer-fen-a-done] is in a group of medicines called **antifibrotic agents**. Another name for this medicine is Esbriet. Esbriet affects your body's immune system and reduces the amount of fibrosis (scarring) in the lungs.

Pirfenidone is one of two medicines that are approved in Canada to treat Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis (IPF). It may also have a role in treating Progressive Fibrosing Interstitial Lung Disease (PF-ILD) which is a group of lung diseases that causes scarring in the lungs. However, it is currently only approved for use in Canada for treatment of IPF.

Is pirfenidone right for me?

Your doctor recommends this medicine for your treatment. But, some patients should not take pirfenidone. Tell your doctor:

- If you are allergic to pirfenidone or any other medicines.
- If you have ever had serious liver disease or kidney disease.
- If you are on dialysis. Patients on dialysis should not use pirfenidone.
- If you are pregnant or trying to become pregnant.

What do I need to know when taking this medicine?

Pirfenidone can interact with other medicines and health products. This means it might not work well with these products.
Tell your doctor:

- About all the medicines, supplements and herbal products you are taking. Tell your pharmacist too.
- If you are taking ciprofloxacin (Cipro) or fluvoxamine (Luvox).
- Avoid these medicines while you are taking pirfenidone.
- If you plan to become pregnant. Use birth control to be sure you or your partner will not become pregnant while you are taking this medicine.
- Do not breastfeed or chestfeed while taking this medicine.

What should I avoid while taking it?

- Avoid smoking while taking this medicine. Smoking may lower the medicine’s effect on your lungs.
- Avoid grapefruit and grapefruit juice while taking this medicine.

What are the side effects of this medicine?

Pirfenidone may cause side effects. Serious side effects are not common, but can happen if you are taking this medicine.

Tell your doctor if you have any of these symptoms:

- upset stomach
- nausea, vomiting, or both
- diarrhea (watery bowel movement)
- heartburn
- skin rash
- sun sensitivity
- lack of energy
- loss of appetite
- weight loss
- dizziness
- yellowish skin colour

How can I reduce any side effects?

Take pirfenidone with food. This will help to avoid having an upset stomach, nausea, vomiting, heart burn or diarrhea.
Pirfenidone can make you feel dizzy.

- Take Pirfenidone with food to lower the chance of becoming dizzy.
- Avoid driving or operating heavy machinery after your first few doses of this medicine. See how you react.
- If you feel dizzy, speak to your doctor. See if your doctor can lower your dose to reduce side effects.

Pirfenidone can cause sun-sensitivity and skin rash.

- Stay out of the sun while taking this medicine.
- If you must be out in the sun, protect your skin. Wear long sleeves, a wide-brimmed hat and sun block (at least SPF 50).

What follow-up care will I need?

Your doctor will order lab tests to see how well pirfenidone is working. These tests can also help your doctor check for any side effects. While you take this medicine, you will have regular tests to check:

- your blood counts (white blood cells, red blood cells, platelets)
- your liver enzymes

Who can I call if I have question or concerns?

Please talk to your Interstitial Lung Disease doctor or nurse. They can answer any questions or concerns about pirfenidone.

This fact sheet was created by the University Health Network Pharmacy Department. It is for your information only. It shouldn't replace talking with your pharmacist. Please talk to your pharmacist or other health care professional if you have any questions about this medicine.

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