



Living with pulmonary fibrosis: Anti-fibrotic medications

Nintedanib (OFEV®)



Disclaimer

This resource provides some information about the anti-fibrotic medication, nintedanib. It does not contain all the available information and **does not take the place of talking to your doctor or pharmacist**. Always seek the guidance of your doctor or other qualified health professional for any questions you may have regarding medications, your health or medical conditions. Please refer to the full Consumer Medicine Information leaflet linked below for a more detailed guide to side effects and safety precautions.

- Tell your doctor and pharmacist if you have had a previous allergy to nintedanib or are allergic to any other medications.
- Tell your doctor and pharmacist if you are taking other prescription and non-prescription medications, vitamins, nutritional supplements, and herbal products. Your doctor may need to change the dose of your medications or monitor you carefully for side effects.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or are breast-feeding.
- Tell your doctor about any recent surgery as nintedanib may affect the way your wounds heal.

Why is this medication being recommended?

Nintedanib is an antifibrotic medication that interferes with the process that causes fibrosis (scarring) in the lungs. This can help to slow down the build-up of scar tissue that occurs in pulmonary fibrosis.

How do I start taking nintedanib?

When starting nintedanib, your doctor will tell you how many capsules to take and when to take them. The usual dose is one 150 mg capsule twice a day, about 12 hours apart. Your doctor might change the dose if necessary.

You will need to have regular blood tests, usually monthly to start for the first six months and then every three months to follow.

What special precautions should I follow?

Before taking nintedanib:

- Talk to your doctor about any medical conditions you may have or previously had.

While taking nintedanib:

- Take nintedanib with food, swallowing the capsules whole with a full glass of water to help reduce the risk of side effects. Do not chew or crush the capsules.
- If you miss a dose, skip it and take your next dose at the regular time. Do not take two doses at the same time.
- Do not stop taking your medicine or lower the dosage without checking with your doctor.
- Regular check-ups and blood tests are required to monitor for unwanted side effects.
- Tell any other treating doctors, pharmacists and dentists that you are taking nintedanib.
- Avoid pregnancy or planning a pregnancy. Use birth control when starting nintedanib, during treatment and for at least three months after treatment if you could become pregnant.
- If you become pregnant, tell your doctor immediately.
- Do not breastfeed while you are taking this medication.

What side effects can this medication cause?

Nintedanib may have unwanted side effects in some people. You should tell your doctor or pharmacist as soon as possible if you develop any of these or other side effects or do not feel well while taking nintedanib.

Common side effects that can occur in people treated with nintedanib include the following:



Gut

- Diarrhoea is a common side effect (note: diarrhoea can usually be controlled safely with anti-diarrhoeal medication such as loperamide).
- Nausea, vomiting, bloating.
- Decreased appetite and weight loss.



Liver

- There is a small risk of developing abnormal liver function tests and blood tests are recommended to monitor for this.
- The symptoms of abnormal liver tests are non-specific but may include feeling more tired than usual or abdominal pain.

Some side effects can be serious. The following side effects are uncommon, but if you experience any of these, contact your doctor immediately:

- Severe diarrhoea - It is important to treat diarrhoea as soon as you notice any signs and talk to your doctor if it becomes severe (more than four bowel movements each day).
- Severe stomach pain or discomfort, fever, chills, vomiting or abdominal bloating.
- Yellow skin or yellow in the white part of your eyes.
- Dark or brown coloured urine.
- Bleeding or bruising more easily than usual.

What monitoring will I need?

Your GP or lung specialist will order regular blood tests to monitor for side effects. You will need to have your liver tests checked monthly for the first three to six months, then every three months. There may be additional tests ordered by your doctor depending on the results.

Your specialist will also review you to discuss any other side effects you may be experiencing. They will also continue to monitor your lung function (breathing tests) over time to map out the progress of your lung condition.

Typically, scripts for nintedanib provide you with a six-month supply of the medication. These will need to be reviewed periodically depending on your progress.



FURTHER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

Lung Foundation Australia Services

- Information and Support Team
- Lung disease information resources
- Education webinars
- Support groups
- Peer-to-peer connections
- Referral to pulmonary rehabilitation and Lungs in Action exercise programs

External Links

- Nintedanib (OFEV®) Consumer Medicine Information leaflet: tga.gov.au
- HealthDirect Nintedanib (OFEV®) webpage: healthdirect.gov.au
- Anti-fibrotic Treatments for IPF fact sheet - Lung Foundation Australia

Lungfoundation.com.au | Freecall 1800 654 301 | enquiries@lungfoundation.com.au

We thank the individuals and teams who contributed to the content and expert review of this fact sheet, in particular, the Interstitial Lung Disease Clinic team at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.

Note to reader: This information is intended as a general guide only and is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice or treatment. While all care is taken to ensure accuracy at the time of publication, Lung Foundation Australia, the Centre of Research Excellence in Pulmonary Fibrosis and its members exclude all liability for any injury, loss or damage incurred by use of or reliance on the information provided. Always consult with your doctor about matters that affect your health.