



## PARP Inhibitors

### What names may be used for this medication?

Lynparza (olaparib), Zejula (niraparib), Rubraca (rucaparib)

### How and why is this medicine given?

PARP inhibitors are given as a pill you take at home. It is used most commonly as a maintenance therapy after finishing IV chemotherapy. These can also be used to treat many different types of cancers. We use these medications most commonly in our office for the treatment of ovarian cancers. A PARP inhibitor may be used by itself or combined with other chemotherapy, immunotherapy, or targeted drugs.

### How does the medicine work?

PARP inhibitors work to interfere with DNA repair, and this is more apparent in cancer cells, especially those with BRCA mutations or something called Homologous Recombination Deficiency (HRD). This DNA repair interference causes the cancer cells to die. The side effects you may experience from these medications are a result of this same type of DNA damage to your healthy cells prior to them having a chance to repair themselves thru other repair pathways. The team will review your medication list at each visit to ensure none of your other medications or vitamins interfere with your prescribed PARP inhibitor.

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## How often is this medicine given?

PARP inhibitors may be given once or multiple times daily depending on the specific medication and the indication for use. While receiving this treatment, you will be seen in the office frequently and lab testing will be obtained to monitor your tolerance. Typically, these medications will be taken for a prolonged period of time up to 2 years depending on circumstances. Your provider will determine the most appropriate duration of therapy based on your clinical situation.

## What side effects does this medicine cause?

There are many possible side effects of all PARP inhibitor drugs. You will be asked to complete a symptom form at each visit in order for us to accurately assess the side effects that you may be experiencing. This form helps your doctor be sure that no adverse effects of treatment are overlooked, and it serves to help you recall which symptoms you may have experienced since your last treatment. The following list is only inclusive of the most common or serious possibilities:

- ❖ Diarrhea, nausea, loss of appetite
- ❖ Headaches
- ❖ Fatigue
- ❖ Achy joints and muscles
- ❖ Skin rash, itching, hives, swelling of the face, lips, tongue, or throat
- ❖ Dry Cough or shortness of breath; this should be reported to your provider as soon as possible.
- ❖ Unusual bruising or bleeding
- ❖ Bone marrow suppression can occur. This is when the bone marrow cannot make enough red cells, white cells, or platelets to keep up with demand. All of your blood counts will be monitored regularly throughout treatment.

- ◆ *Anemia* is the result of not enough red blood cells and may cause fatigue, chest pain, shortness of breath, or dizziness.
  - ◆ *Neutropenia* results when your white blood cell count goes too low, and this will put you at an increased risk for infection. It is particularly important that you avoid sick friends and family; be diligent about hand-washing as well. This does not mean that you cannot be out in public, and in fact you can continue to participate in normal activities such as going to church or a movie, etc. If you think you may have an infection or have a fever of 100.5°F or more, call the office immediately.
  - ◆ *Thrombocytopenia* is the term for too low of a platelet count. This can lead to excessive bruising or bleeding with only minor injury such as brushing your teeth or blowing your nose.
  - ❖ Change in taste
  - ❖ There is a very low risk (1-3%) of developing a low-grade type of blood disorder called Myelodysplastic Syndrome which can be a precursor to Leukemia. This is why it is important to remain compliant with blood draws and follow up visits while on this medication. This risk increases with prolonged therapy, which is why these medications are not typically recommended beyond 2-3 years.
  - ❖ If you are pregnant or become pregnant during therapy, you should notify your doctor immediately.
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