

Lenalidomide and generic equivalents

Information for the patient

1. Why am I receiving this leaflet?

You are currently being treated with lenalidomide. This medicine is also known by its brand name Revlimid[®]. Until recently, only one manufacturer produced lenalidomide (Bristol Myers Squibb Pharmaceuticals).

Lenalidomide is now available from other manufacturers because it is no longer protected by a patent. The versions of lenalidomide from other manufacturers are known as generic equivalents. Using generic equivalents can be more cost-effective for the NHS.

From December 2022, NHS Wales will start to use generic equivalents of lenalidomide. You can continue to use the Revlimid[®] you have until it runs out. When your next prescription is ordered, a generic equivalent of lenalidomide will be provided. You may notice that the capsules you receive come in different packaging. The colour of the capsules and their markings may also be different.

2. How should I take generic lenalidomide?

Take generic lenalidomide in the same way as you took Revlimid[®]. Both Revlimid[®] and generic lenalidomide come in a variety of strengths. You will be given the correct strengths of generic lenalidomide for you. Your doctor, nurse or pharmacist will tell you how many of each capsule to take and when to take them. If you usually take dexamethasone or other medicines for cancer with your lenalidomide, carry on doing this.

Always read the directions on your medicines carefully so you know how to take your capsules. Take generic lenalidomide at the same time each day that you take it. Swallow the capsules whole with water; do not open or chew them. You can take generic lenalidomide with or without food.

As with Revlimid[®], caregivers and family members should wear disposable gloves when handling the blister or capsule. Gloves should then be removed carefully and disposed of safely.

3. What does this change mean for me?

Capsules of the same strength of generic lenalidomide and Revlimid[®] contain the same amount of active ingredient (lenalidomide). For example, Revlimid[®] 10mg capsules contain the same amount of lenalidomide as 10mg capsules of generic lenalidomide so the treatment you receive will remain unchanged.

Your doctor will continue to do the same tests and checks that they do while you are being treated with Revlimid[®].

There are very small differences between the excipients (non-active ingredients) in generic lenalidomide and Revlimid[®]. We would not expect these small differences to cause any significant problems.

- Generic lenalidomide capsules contain very small amounts of sodium per capsule or none at all.

- Most generic versions of lenalidomide contain about the same amount of lactose as Revlimid®.
- A few generic lenalidomide products contain tartrazine or food colours that have been linked to hyperactivity in children. Speak to your pharmacist if you are sensitive to tartrazine or other food colours.
- The capsule shells of generic lenalidomide products and Revlimid® all contain gelatin.

The side effects of generic lenalidomide products are expected to be the same as Revlimid®. As with all medicines, if you experience any side effects from your treatment, you should report it to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. You can also use the Yellow Card app (download from [Google Play](#) or [Apple App Store](#)) or the Yellow Card [site](#) to report side effects.

4. How should I store generic lenalidomide?

Store generic lenalidomide at normal room temperature (below 25°C), away from heat and direct sunlight.

5. Is the pregnancy advice the same for generic lenalidomide?

Generic lenalidomide contains the same active ingredient (lenalidomide) as Revlimid®. Both Revlimid® and generic lenalidomide products are expected to harm unborn babies, so avoid pregnancy or making someone pregnant while you are taking lenalidomide. If you are able to become pregnant when you switch to generic lenalidomide, you will still need to provide confirmation to your doctor that the necessary pregnancy prevention measures have been taken.

6. What is lenalidomide and how is it used?

Lenalidomide is a medicine that is taken by mouth as capsules. It acts against cancer cells by stopping their growth, helping your immune system to attack them, and by preventing cancer cells from developing the blood supply they need to grow.

Further advice

If you have further queries about lenalidomide or generic equivalents, please discuss these with a doctor, nurse or pharmacist in the hospital team responsible for your care.

The **Cancer Research UK** and **Macmillan Cancer Support** sites provide information on lenalidomide and practical and emotional support for people living with cancer:

<https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/cancer-in-general/treatment/cancer-drugs/drugs/lenalidomide>

<https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/treatments-and-drugs/lenalidomide>

Mae'r daflen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This leaflet is also available in Welsh.