Erlotinib (er LOE tye nib)  
**Patient Education**

**US Brand Names:** Tarceva  

**Therapeutic Category:** Targeted therapy  

**What is this medicine used for?**  
- Used to treat cancer. More specifically this particular drug is used to treat lung or pancreatic cancers.  

**How does it work?**  
- Targeted therapy such as Erlotinib react with certain proteins on the surface of a cell in your body. This medicine can be made to target a protein on a certain type of cancer cell. Some targeted therapies will affect a cancer cell and/or normal cells.  

**What should my doctor or nurse know before I take this medication?**  
- If you are allergic to any medicines.  
- If you are taking other over the counter or prescription medicines, including vitamins and herbal remedies.  
- If you are, or may be pregnant.  
- If you are breast feeding.  

**How is this drug given?**  
- This medicine can be used alone or in combination with other cancer medicine.  
- This medicine is given orally.  
- Take this medicine on an empty stomach. Take 1 hour before or 2 hours after meals.  

**What are the general precautions when taking this medicine?**  
- Talk with your doctor or nurse before taking aspirin, aspirin-containing products, over-the-counter or prescription medications, including vitamins and herbal remedies. Many medications can interact with erlotinib and it is important to review the entire list of your medicines with your health care team before you start this treatment  
- Do not take antacids within 2 hours of this medicine.  
- Drink 8 to 10 glasses of non-caffeinated liquid every day (unless told otherwise by your doctor or nurse).
If you or your partner can get pregnant, use birth control during your treatment. Once completing treatment, discuss the timing for discontinuing birth control measures with your provider. (See Patient Teaching Sheet: Fertility)

What are the common side effects of this medicine?

- Acne like rash. Limit sun exposure and use sunblock. There are a variety of skin care products and some oral medications that you can receive if the rash is severe. The rash tends to peak during the first 1 to 3 weeks.
- Diarrhea: Notify health provider if you have more than four loose stools a day for more than two days. Be sure and drink plenty of extra fluids if you have diarrhea. You may take over-the-counter Imodium as per the directions on the box.
- Nausea and vomiting can occur rarely.
- Fatigue.

Danger signals to report immediately to your doctor or nurse:

- Signs or symptoms of infection. This includes a fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or greater, chills, severe sore throat, ear or sinus pain, cough, increased sputum or change in color, painful urination, mouth sores, wound that will not heal, or anal itching or pain.
- Severe diarrhea not controlled by medication.
- Not able to eat or drink.
- Dark urine or yellow skin or eyes.
- Feeling extremely tired, weak, dizzy or light headed.
- Sudden change in vision, eye pain or irritation.
- Go to your nearest emergency room for signs of a life-threatening reaction: wheezing, chest tightness, fever, itching, bad cough, blue skin color, seizures, or swelling of face, lips, tongue or throat.

How should I store the oral medicine?

- Keep all medicine out of reach of children & pets.
- Consult your pharmacist for instructions on storage and disposal of this medication.

What do I do if I miss an oral dose?

Contact your doctor or nurse. Do not make up a skipped dose without discussing with your health care team.