Lenalidomide (le na LID oh mide)
Patient Education

US Brand Names: Revlimid
Therapeutic Category: Immunosuppressant agent

What is this medicine used for?
Used to treat cancer. More specifically this particular drug is used to treat Myelodysplastic Syndrome (MDS with 5q deletion) and Multiple Myeloma.

How does it work?
Lenalidomide works by cutting off the cancer’s blood supply and starving the cancer. Lenalidomide is a targeted therapy that reacts with certain markers on the surface of cells that form blood vessels in your body. This medicine stops the growth of blood vessel cells at the cancer site and throughout your body.

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.
- If you have kidney problems.
- Prior severe rash with thalidomide.

How is this drug given?
- This medicine can be used alone or in combination with other cancer medicine.
- This medicine is taken by mouth.
- This drug is distributed through the Rev Assist program and you must agree to comply with the requirements of the program before beginning treatment. **Stringent requirements for use of effective contraception must be followed before initiating, during and post treatment with thalidomide.**

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.
- Drink 8 to 10 glasses of non-caffeinated liquid every day (unless told otherwise by your doctor or nurse).
If you have kidney problems.

**What are the common side effects of this medicine?**

- Pruritus; Itchy skin and rash.
- Fatigue.
- Constipation: take stool softener and motility medication as ordered.
- Increase in risk for forming blood clots (thrombosis) when this drug is used with other chemotherapy agents (combination therapy) such as dexamethasone. Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and pulmonary embolism (PE) have occurred.

- Myelosuppression (drop in number of blood cells)
  Will cause a drop in the number of white blood cells in your body. These cells fight infection. A drop in the number of these cells puts you at risk for infection (Neutropenia). Talk to your doctor or nurse about your risk. Practice good hand washing and avoid people with infections, colds or flu when you are at risk. (pt. teaching sheet Neutropenia)

Will cause a drop in the number of platelets in your body (thrombocytopenia). Platelets help your blood clot. A drop in platelets puts you at risk for bleeding. You may bleed easily during your treatment. Talk to your doctor or nurse about your risk. Avoid injury to your skin and mucous membranes by using a soft toothbrush, electric razor, etc when you are at risk. (pt. teaching sheet thrombocytopenia)

May cause a drop in the number of your red blood cells in your body. Red blood cells carry oxygen through out your body. This drop in red blood cells may lead to you feeling tired/fatigued (Anemia). Talk to your doctor or nurse about your risk. (pt. teaching sheet 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 nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea not controlled by medication.
- Not able to eat or drink.
- Bleeding from your nose, mouth, gums, or in your urine or bowel movements.
- Bruising that does not heal.
- Feeling extremely tired, weak, dizzy or light headed.
- Shortness of breath, chest pain, or arm or leg swelling (signs of blood clot).

**How should I store the oral medicine?**

- Avoid extensive handling of capsules; capsules should remain in blister pack until ready to be taken. If exposed to the powder content from broken capsules or body fluids from patients receiving lenalidomide, the exposed area should be washed with soap and water.
- 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.