Nilotinib (nye LOE ti nib)
Patient Education

US Brand Names: Tasigna
Therapeutic Category: targeted therapy

What is this medicine used for?
Used to treat cancer. More specifically this particular drug is used to treat Philadelphia chromosome-positive chronic myelogenous leukemia (Ph+ CML).

How does it work?
- Targeted therapies including nilotinib react with certain proteins on the surface of cells in your body. This medicine can be made to target a protein on certain types of cancer cells. 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.
- If you have heart disease.
- If you have liver problems.

How is this drug given?
- This medicine can be used alone or in combination with other cancer medicine.
- This medicine is taken by mouth twice daily, 12 hours apart. Swallow capsules whole with water. Administer on an empty stomach, at least 1 hour before or 2 hours after food. Do not break, crush, or chew tablets.

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 *(e.g. antihypertensive medicine), including vitamins and herbal remedies.
- Drink 8 to 10 glasses of non-caffeinated liquid every day (unless told otherwise by your doctor or nurse).
- Avoid eating or drinking grapefruit juice, or St John’s Wort as long as you are taking nilotinib.
- 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. (pt. teaching
What are the common side effects of this medicine?
Most common side effects are:

- Dry skin
- May cause an increase in your blood pressure (hypertension). Your blood pressure will be monitored while you are taking this medication.
- May cause changes in your liver function. Your liver function will be monitored while you are taking this medication.
- May cause heart abnormalities. Your heart function will be monitored while you are taking this medication.
- Myelosuppression (drop in number of blood cells)
  May 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)

- May 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)

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, anal itching or pain, or pain in your heels that prevent you from walking.
- 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.

How should I store this 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 a dose?
Contact your doctor or nurse. Do not make up a skipped dose without discussing with your health care team.