Thalidomide (tha LI doe mide)
Patient Education

**US Brand Names:** Thalidomide

**Therapeutic Category:** Immunosuppressant agent

**What is this medicine used for?**
Used to treat cancer. More specifically this particular drug is used to treat Multiple Myeloma.

**How does it work?**
Thalidomide works by cutting off the cancers blood supply and starving the cancer. Thalidomide 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.

**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 STEPS 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).

**What are the common side effects of this medicine?**
Peripheral neuropathy, numbness, tingling and pain in hands and feet, which may be irreversible.
- Sleepiness, fatigue.
- Rash.
- Drop in blood pressure which you may cause lightheadedness.
- Constipation: take stool softener and motility medication as ordered.

**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.

**How should I store this 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 thalidomide, the exposed area should be washed with soap and water.
- Keep all medicine out of reach of children and 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.