

Changes to imatinib (Glivec)

The brand of your medicine, imatinib, is changing

1. What's changing?

- Your medicine imatinib (Glivec) tablet is changing brand. The new brand is called Imatinib-Rex and it is a capsule.
- How you receive your imatinib is also changing. You will no longer receive your imatinib via courier delivery. You will need to pick up your imatinib from your pharmacy.
- You will need to contact your doctor or oncologist to get a prescription for imatinib (Imatinib-Rex brand).

2. When is this happening?

You will continue to receive your normal deliveries of Glivec until the **last four-week supply** of imatinib is delivered on **25 October 2023**.

Sometime during October or November, you should contact your doctor or oncologist to get a prescription for imatinib (Imatinib-Rex brand). You will need a new prescription to pick up more imatinib.

You can change to Imatinib-Rex at any time after you get a new prescription (but use up your supplies of Glivec first). You can let us know if you do not want any more Glivec sent to you – call **0800 023 588 option 2** and we will stop any further deliveries of Glivec.

3. Does Imatinib-Rex work the same as Glivec?

Yes. The suppliers of Imatinib-Rex have proven to Medsafe New Zealand that it works the same as Glivec.

Medsafe is the agency in New Zealand that makes sure all medicines meet standards of safety, quality and efficacy.

Imatinib-Rex contains the same amount of the active medicine, imatinib, as Glivec.

This means that people will get the same results taking Imatinib-Rex as they do from taking Glivec. You should not experience any different side-effects from taking a different brand of imatinib.

4. Does Imatinib-Rex look different to Glivec?

Imatinib-Rex is a capsule and Glivec is a tablet. The picture below shows you what Imatinib-Rex looks like compared to Glivec:

*Glivec tablets
100mg*



*Imatinib-Rex capsules
100mg*



5. Do I need to take the same amount of Imatinib-Rex as Glivec?

Yes. One 100mg Imatinib-Rex capsule contains the same amount of the active medicine, imatinib mesilate, as one 100mg tablet of Glivec does.

There are also 400mg capsules of Imatinib-Rex available; your doctor can choose to prescribe the 100mg or 400mg capsules depending on the dose you are taking.

It is very important that you take the amount of imatinib medicine as it has been prescribed for you.

Talk to your oncologist directly if you have questions about the dose of imatinib that has been prescribed for you.

6. How will I get my imatinib?

You will get your imatinib from a community pharmacy, just as most other medicines are provided. You will need to get a prescription for imatinib every 3 months.

You will need to contact your doctor to get a prescription for imatinib. Your oncologist is currently responsible for your prescriptions. They will make the decision to either continue to write prescriptions for you or they may ask your GP to write prescriptions.

We have written to your oncologist and your GP (if known to us) so that they are aware of this change.

7. How much imatinib will I get?

You will get a prescription for 3 months' supply but will get 1 month's supply at a time from the pharmacy.

Talk to your pharmacist first but you may be able to pick up 3 months' supply of imatinib at once if you:

- have limited physical mobility
- live and work more than 30 minutes from the nearest pharmacy by your normal form of transport
- you are moving to another area, or
- you are travelling and will be away when the repeat prescriptions are due.

You will need a new prescription every 3 months, just as you would for other medicines.

8. Why is Pharmac changing my brand?

All medicines have a patent on them when they are developed. This means that only the

supplier who developed the medicine can make it for a number of years.

Once the patent expires, then other suppliers can make and supply the same medicine. This means that the cost of the medicine can drop.

The patent for the treatment of gastrointestinal stromal tumour (GIST) has now expired. Other suppliers can make imatinib to treat GIST. The change from the Glivec brand to Imatinib-Rex brand of imatinib frees up additional funds that Pharmac can use to fund other medicines.

9. How much will this cost me?

Pharmacy costs

There is no cost for getting your imatinib from a pharmacy.

Prescription costs

If your oncologist writes a prescription for your imatinib there will be no cost for this.

GP costs

If your GP writes a prescription for your imatinib there may be a cost for this.

If you visit your GP or health professional often, there may be some ways for your health costs to be reduced. Ask your doctor/nurse if you could qualify for the Care Plus programme next time you visit.

Find out more at [TeWhatuOra.govt.nz](https://www.TeWhatuOra.govt.nz) search: Care Plus.

10. Where can I get more information?

If you have any questions about your imatinib, please talk to your oncologist or GP.

Check our website: [pharmac.govt.nz/Glivec](https://www.pharmac.govt.nz/Glivec)

If you have any questions about the changes, please email: enquiry@pharmac.govt.nz

or call: [0800 66 00 50](tel:0800660050)