

LIFEFEST 2026

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Side Effects Management

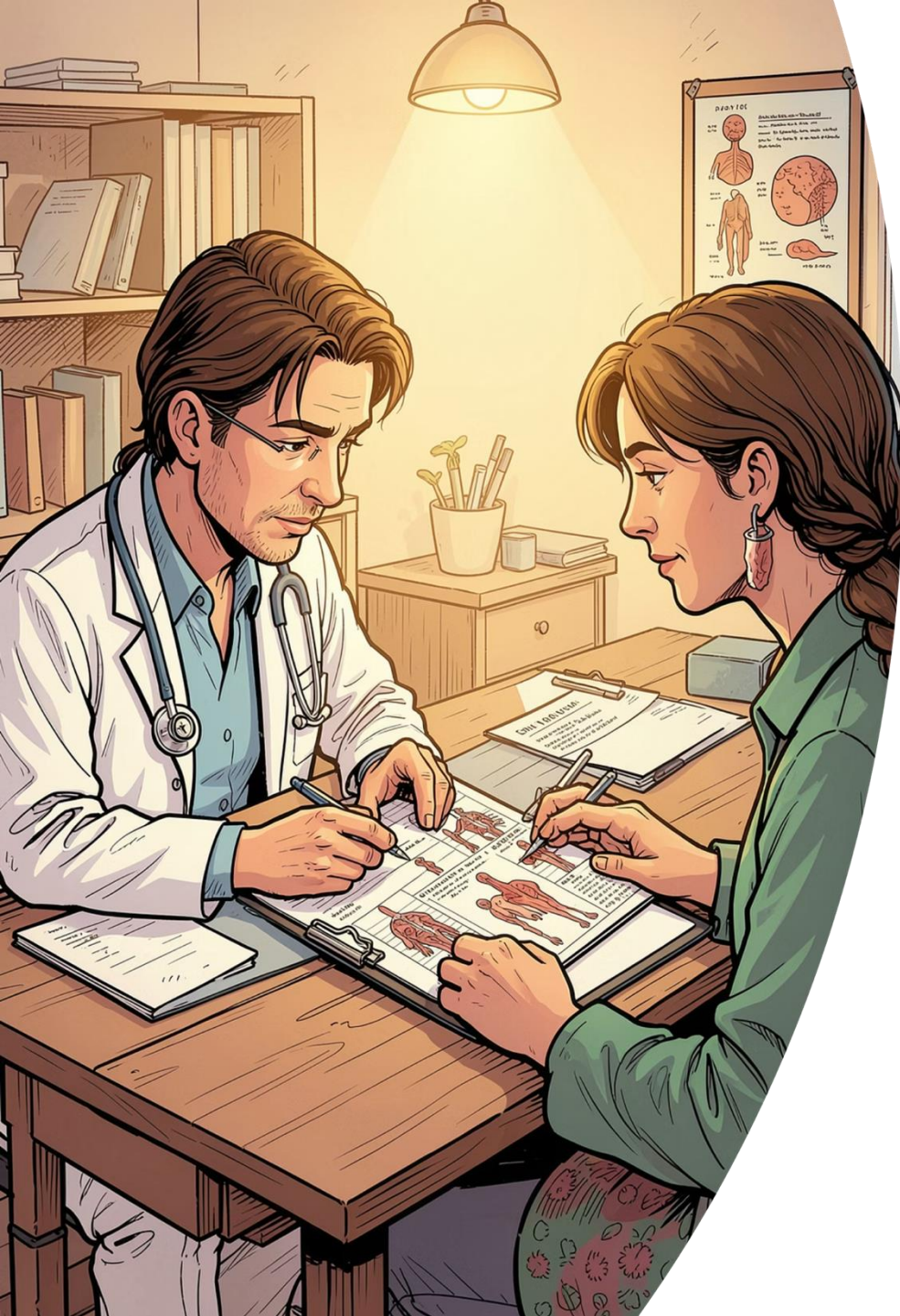
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Managing Side Effects: Your Guide to TKI Therapy for GIST

Navigating tyrosine kinase inhibitor therapy — understanding what to expect, how to manage it and when to reach out to your care team.

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Transforming GIST Care

Before tyrosine kinase inhibitors (TKIs), the outlook for GIST patients was stark — median survival was just **10 to 20 months**. Today, TKIs have fundamentally changed that reality, turning GIST into a manageable chronic condition for many patients.

Then: Limited Options

- Few options beyond surgery
- Metastatic disease progressed quickly

Now: Lifelong Therapy

TKIs suppress tumor growth and support long term disease control

The Balance

Long-term therapy means managing side effects over time.
Quality of life is central to successful treatment.

The TKI Toolkit: Understanding Your Medications

1

Imatinib (1st Line)

The gold standard for most GIST patients. Common effects include fluid retention, nausea, muscle cramps, and fatigue.

2

Sunitinib (2nd Line)

Broader side effect profile: thyroid dysfunction, hand-foot syndrome, hypertension, and blistering skin reactions.

3

Regorafenib (3rd Line)

A multi-kinase inhibitor. Hand-foot reaction, diarrhea, and fatigue are most prominent. Dose adjustments are common and effective.

4

Ripretinib (4th Line)

A switch-control inhibitor active against a wide range of resistance mutations. Side Effects: Muscle pain, hair loss, and fatigue.

5

Avapritinib (PDGFRA D842V)

Precision-targeted for the PDGFRA D842V mutation. Unique risk of cognitive effects — brain fog, memory changes

Shared Side Effects Across TKIs

While each TKI has its own profile, several side effects are shared across the class. Recognizing these early aids in early management

Gastrointestinal

Nausea, diarrhea, and heartburn are among the most frequently reported complaints. These often improve with time, dietary adjustments, and supportive medications like antiemetics or antidiarrheals.

- Take with food and a full glass of water
- Small, frequent meals reduce nausea
- Stay hydrated — aim for 8+ glasses daily

Skin & Circulation

Rash, dermatitis, and changes in skin pigmentation are common. Some TKIs affect blood pressure and circulation, requiring regular monitoring.

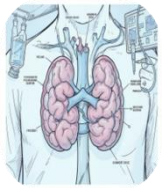
- Use gentle, fragrance-free moisturizers
- Apply broad-spectrum sunscreen daily
- Report new rashes or blistering promptly

Fatigue

A consistent challenge across all TKIs.

- Pacing, rest, and light activity can help.

Drug-Specific Signals: What to Watch



Sunitinib: Endocrine & Skin

Sunitinib carries a higher risk of **thyroid dysfunction** — hypothyroidism is common and requires regular TSH monitoring.

It can also cause **blistering skin reactions** and hand-foot syndrome.

Report new skin changes or unexplained fatigue (a thyroid symptom) promptly.



Avapritinib: Nervous System

Avapritinib has a **unique association with cognitive effects** — Patients may experience brain fog, memory changes, or difficulty concentrating.

These are often dose-dependent and reversible.

Report any mental changes to your oncologist immediately; do not dismiss them as stress.



Ripretinib & Imatinib: Nerve & Skin

Ripretinib has been associated with **peripheral neuropathy** — tingling, numbness, or pain in the hands and feet. Imatinib, while generally well tolerated, carries a **rare risk of pemphigus**, a serious blistering skin condition. Both require prompt reporting of new nerve or skin symptoms.

Managing the First Month and Beyond

Early Vigilance

First month: peak nausea, fatigue, diarrhea; close monitoring



Long-Term Monitoring

After one year: thyroid, heart, cognitive changes; ongoing communication



Symptom Management

Address acute effects and support daily function

The first month is the most critical window for early side effects. However, a **second wave often emerges after one year** of therapy — including endocrine changes, cardiovascular effects, and cumulative fatigue.

Practical Strategies for Daily Life

Small, consistent habits can significantly reduce the burden of TKI side effects and can help maintain quality of life throughout treatment.



Skin Care

Use gentle, fragrance-free products. Apply moisturizer twice daily. Wear sunscreen (SPF 30+) every day — TKIs can increase sun sensitivity. Report new rashes, peeling, or blistering to your team.



Digestive Health

Eat small, frequent meals rather than large ones. Avoid spicy, greasy, or very hot foods if nausea is present. Ginger tea or crackers can help. Take your TKI with food and a full glass of water.



Hydration

Adequate hydration supports drug metabolism and reduces the severity of many systemic side effects. Aim for at least 8 glasses of water daily, more if you have diarrhea or vomiting.



Energy & Fatigue

Pace your activities. Prioritize rest without guilt. Light exercise — walking, gentle yoga — can actually reduce fatigue over time. Ask your team about a referral to physical therapy if fatigue is severe.

When to Consult Your Team

Effective TKI therapy is a partnership. Your oncology team needs to hear from you — not just at scheduled visits, but whenever something changes. **Never suffer in silence.**

Report Immediately

Contact your team right away for: severe or worsening pain, new blisters or skin breakdown, sudden mood or cognitive changes, chest pain, shortness of breath, or signs of infection (fever, chills). These can signal serious complications requiring urgent attention.

Adherence vs. Toxicity

Many patients fear that reporting side effects will mean stopping treatment. In most cases, **dose modifications** — not discontinuation — are the solution.

Your team can adjust your dose, add supportive medications, or switch agents while maintaining tumor control.

Your Quality of Life Matters

Supportive care is not optional — it is a pillar of successful treatment.

Ask about referrals to **nutritionists, social workers, psychologists, or palliative care specialists**. Managing the whole person, not just the tumor, is the goal of modern GIST care.

 Keep a symptom diary — note the date, severity, and triggers of side effects. This helps your team make informed decisions at each visit.

Your Journey, Your Control

Living with GIST on TKI therapy is a marathon, not a sprint. The knowledge you carry — about your medications, your side effects, and your rights as a patient — is your most powerful tool.

Empowerment Through Knowledge

Understanding your TKI's side effect profile allows for faster, more effective interventions. The more you know, the better you can advocate for yourself.

Commitment to Therapy

Continued TKI therapy is the cornerstone of managing GIST as a chronic condition. Work with your team to find a tolerable regimen — don't stop without consulting them first.

Be Your Own Best Advocate

Log your symptoms. Ask questions at every visit. Bring a support person to appointments. You are the expert on your own body — your voice matters in every treatment decision.

"The goal is not just to live longer — it is to live well. Your quality of life is a medical priority, not an afterthought."

Questions?



Thank you for your attention and engagement today.

We hope this presentation has provided valuable insights into managing side effects and empowering your GIST journey.

Please feel free to ask any questions you may have, or reach out to our team for further discussion.



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