

HOW TO ENCOURAGE YOUR CLL PATIENTS TO BE MORE ACTIVE IN THEIR CARE

- Tell patients you welcome questions and honest, detailed conversation.
 - They can even have a list of questions/topics they'd like to address during the appointment.
 - They can also reach out via the patient portal or call your office after the appointment for any follow-up questions.
- Remind them they can bring family members or friends to appointments, so they feel supported.
- Allow patients to take notes or record, if appropriate.
- Be open to talking about financial assistance options they may be eligible for.

TIP

"It's important to educate patients about their disease, treatment, potential side effects, and try to anticipate and mitigate those side effects so patients know exactly what they're expecting. It's also essential to have a great team around you because practicing medicine, particularly oncology, is not a solo practice. We need a village to take care of our patients. Having well-trained nurses and clinical pharmacists are key members of the team that will help with patient care." - **Andres Chang, MD, PhD**

CLL DOSE MODIFICATION | KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The decision to dose-escalate or dose-reduce depends on the specific treatment and individual patient factors.
 - For BCL-2 inhibitors, dose escalation happens at the beginning of therapy to mitigate side effects like tumor lysis syndrome.
 - In most other scenarios, dose reductions are implemented to mitigate adverse events.
- In all cases, you should take into account a patient's comorbidities and what other medications they are on, particularly if they are on medications that affect their cytochrome P450 system.
- Closed monitoring of toxicities and awareness of dose reduction guidelines are crucial during treatment initiation.
- In most cases, it's recommended to hold the drug until the side effect resolves and then resume at the same dose.
- Dose reduction aims to strike a balance between minimizing toxicity/side effects and maintaining therapeutic efficacy.
- Adjusting the dose based on the severity of side effects can optimize patient outcomes.
- Depending on how severe a side effect is, you may want to dose reduce somewhat quicker or find an alternative treatment, particularly for BTK inhibitors.
 - Switching to a different BTK inhibitor may improve tolerability if the initial one is poorly tolerated. For instance, hypertension induced by ibrutinib may be better managed with acalabrutinib or zanubrutinib.

[Source]

BEST PRACTICES FOR MANAGING CLL SIDE EFFECTS

- Educate patients ahead of time and as you begin treatment to help them understand what to expect.
 - This can be through phone calls done by you, your pharmacist or nurse and sharing printed patient education materials.
 - It can be overwhelming to hear and absorb information all at once, so materials through [The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society](#), [Lymphoma Research Foundation](#) and the [CLL Society](#) can be particularly helpful for patients to refer back to after visits.
 - Recommend easy ways to contact your team, such as your hospital's patient portal or calling the office.
 - By talking through potential issues, patients may feel better and more prepared.
- Remind patients that on Google, what comes up first in searches are often scary, unique cases or side effects. Redirect instead to credible sources.
- In medicine, there can sometimes be a thought that reducing treatment dose is a bad thing, and providers should avoid it. However, dose reduction can make a difference in side effects while still maintaining efficacy. Don't be afraid to dose-reduce, especially if toxicities are not improving.

TIP

"It's important to empower your patients. Particularly diseases like CLL, where two-thirds of patients at diagnosis don't require treatment, and they're told that they have cancer, and then all of a sudden they're told that they don't need treatment can be very scary. Provide your patients with resources, so they feel they have their disease understood and that they're doing the best that they can. An empowered patient is the best patient. It makes it better for everyone involved." - **Daniel Ermann, MD**

CLL EPEP PORTAL

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The Empowering Providers to Empower Patients Portal uses PEN's robust resource library and that of numerous trusted advocacy partners to collate a vetted list of patient education resources, all in one place. Select resources within the form and receive an emailed PDF within minutes to share with your patients – try it today.

