

# Prescriber's Checklist: Summary of Recommendations

# Considerations in Gilenya® (fingolimod) Patient Selection

Fingolimod is suitable for adult patients for the treatment of highly active RRMS\*. While many patients may be suitable for treatment, the following section highlights patients in whom fingolimod is contraindicated or not recommended.

## Considerations for treatment initiation

Fingolimod causes transient heart rate reduction and may cause AV conduction delays following initiation of treatment. All patients should be monitored for a minimum of 6 hours on treatment initiation. Below is a brief overview of monitoring requirements. Refer to page 4 for more information.



### Appropriate

Eligible adult patients with highly active RRMS who have not responded to a full and adequate course of at least one disease modifying therapy or those with rapidly evolving, severe RRMS

## Contraindications

Known immunodeficiency syndrome, patients with increased risk for opportunistic infections (including immunocompromised patients), severe active infections, active chronic infections, known active malignancies, severe liver impairment, and hypersensitivity to the active substance or to any of the excipients.

## The following patients should not be treated with fingolimod

- Those who are pregnant
- Those who are taking Class Ia or Class III antiarrhythmics

### Not recommended

**Consider only after performing risk/benefit analysis and consulting a cardiologist**

Consult cardiologist regarding appropriate first-dose monitoring

Bradyarrhythmia<sup>†</sup>, significant QT-interval prolongation<sup>‡</sup>, severe untreated sleep apnoea, significant cardiovascular disease<sup>§</sup>, uncontrolled hypertension, cerebrovascular disease, or recurrent syncope

**At least overnight extended monitoring is recommended.**

Consult cardiologist regarding possibility of switching to non-heart-rate-lowering drugs

Taking beta-blockers, heart-rate-lowering calcium channel blockers<sup>¶</sup>, or other substances that are known to lower the heart rate<sup>||</sup>

**If change in medication is not possible, extend monitoring to at least overnight.**

\*RRMS=relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis.

<sup>†</sup>Bradyarrhythmia includes the following: second-degree Mobitz type II or higher atrioventricular (AV) block, sick sinus syndrome, sinoatrial heart block, history of symptomatic bradycardia.

<sup>‡</sup>Significant cardiovascular disease includes the following: ischaemic heart disease (including angina pectoris), history of myocardial infarction, congestive heart failure, history of cardiac arrest.

<sup>§</sup>Includes verapamil, diltiazem, or ivabradine.

<sup>¶</sup>Includes digoxin, anticholinesteratic agents, or pilocarpine.

<sup>||</sup>QTc >470 msec (females) or >450 msec (males).

# Physician Checklist – Recommended Steps to Managing Patients on Fingolimod

The checklist and schematic that follow are intended to assist in the management of patients on fingolimod. Key steps and considerations while starting, continuing, or discontinuing treatment are provided.

## Prior to initiating treatment

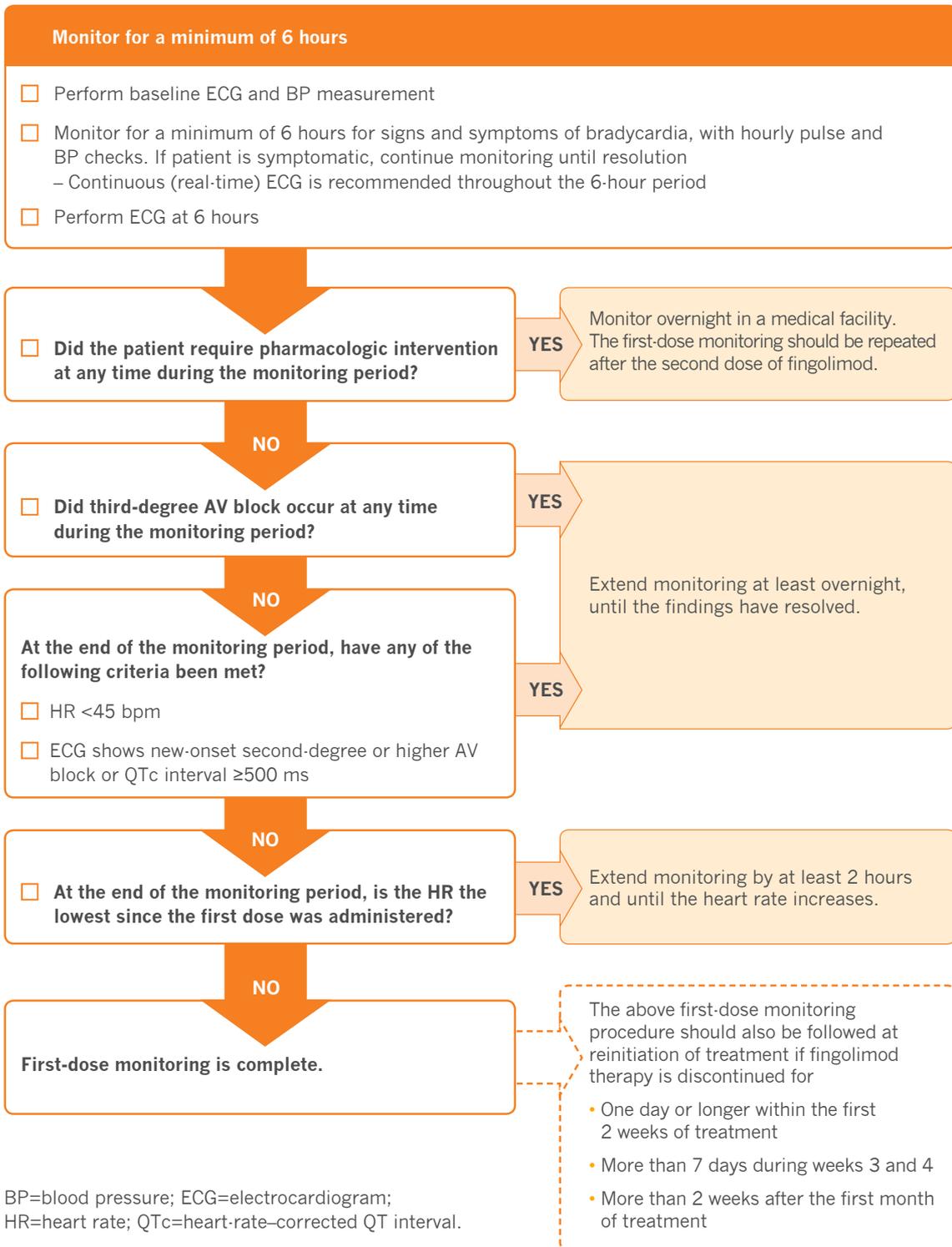
- Ensure patients are not concomitantly taking Class Ia or Class III antiarrhythmic medicines
- Conduct baseline electrocardiogram (ECG) and blood pressure measurement
- Treatment with fingolimod is not recommended in the following patients, unless anticipated benefits outweigh the potential risks:
  - Those with bradyarrhythmia<sup>†</sup>, significant cardiovascular disease<sup>#</sup>, significant QT-interval prolongation, uncontrolled hypertension, cerebrovascular disease, severe untreated sleep apnoea, or a history of recurrent syncope
    - Seek advice from a cardiologist regarding the most appropriate monitoring at treatment initiation; at least overnight extended monitoring is recommended
  - Those receiving concurrent therapy with beta-blockers, heart-rate–lowering calcium channel blockers (eg, verapamil, diltiazem, ivabradine), or other substances which may decrease heart rate (eg, digoxin, anticholinesteratic agents, pilocarpine)
    - Seek advice from a cardiologist regarding a switch to non-heart-rate–lowering medicinal products prior to initiation of treatment
    - If heart-rate–lowering medication cannot be stopped, seek advice from a cardiologist regarding the most appropriate monitoring at treatment initiation; at least overnight extended monitoring is recommended
- Avoid co-administration of anti-neoplastic, immunomodulatory or immunosuppressive therapies due to the risk of additive immune system effects. For the same reason, a decision to use prolonged concomitant treatment with corticosteroids should be taken after careful consideration
- Obtain recent (within 6 months) transaminase, and bilirubin levels
- Obtain recent (within 6 months or after discontinuation of prior therapy) full blood count
- Confirm a negative pregnancy test result
- Counsel on the need for effective contraception in women of childbearing age due to teratogenic risk to foetus
- Delay initiation of treatment in patients with severe active infection until resolved
- Check varicella zoster virus (VZV) antibody status in patients without a healthcare professional confirmed history of chickenpox or documentation of a full course of varicella vaccination. If negative, a full course of vaccination with varicella vaccine is recommended and treatment initiation should be delayed for 1 month to allow full effect of vaccination to occur
- Conduct an ophthalmologic evaluation in patients with history of uveitis or diabetes mellitus
- Provide patients with a Patient Reminder Card

<sup>†</sup>Bradyarrhythmia includes the following: second-degree Mobitz type II or higher AV block, sick sinus syndrome, sinoatrial heart block, history of symptomatic bradycardia.

<sup>#</sup>Significant cardiovascular disease includes the following: ischaemic heart disease (including angina pectoris), history of myocardial infarction, congestive heart failure, history of cardiac arrest.

## Treatment initiation algorithm

All patients will need to be monitored for at least 6 hours during treatment initiation, as described in the algorithm below. In addition, for patients in whom fingolimod is not recommended (see page 2), advice should be sought from a cardiologist regarding appropriate monitoring; at least overnight monitoring is recommended for this group.



### During treatment

- Conduct a full ophthalmologic evaluation at 3 to 4 months after starting treatment
  - Conduct periodic ophthalmologic evaluations in patients with history of uveitis or diabetes mellitus
  - Counsel patients to report any visual disturbance during treatment
  - Evaluate the fundus, including the macula, and discontinue treatment if macular oedema is confirmed
- Counsel patients to report signs and symptoms of infection
  - Prompt antimicrobial treatment should be initiated if indicated
  - Perform prompt diagnostic evaluation in patients with symptoms and signs consistent with cryptococcal meningitis, and initiate appropriate treatment if diagnosed
  - Be vigilant for clinical symptoms or MRI findings that may be suggestive of PML. If PML is suspected, treatment with fingolimod should be suspended until PML has been excluded
  - Suspend treatment during serious infections
- Check full blood count periodically during treatment, at month 3 and at least yearly thereafter, and interrupt treatment if lymphocyte count is confirmed as  $<0.2 \times 10^9/L$
- Check liver transaminases at months 1, 3, 6, 9, and 12 and periodically thereafter, or at any time there are signs or symptoms of hepatic dysfunction
  - Monitor more frequently if liver transaminases rise above 5 times the ULN, and interrupt treatment if liver transaminases remain elevated above this level until recovery
- During treatment and for up to 2 months after discontinuation
  - Vaccinations may be less effective
  - Live attenuated vaccines may carry a risk of infection and should be avoided
- Pregnancy tests should be repeated at suitable intervals. Discontinue treatment if a patient becomes pregnant
  - To help determine the effects of fingolimod exposure in pregnant women with MS, physicians are encouraged to report pregnant patients who may have been exposed to fingolimod at any time during pregnancy (from 8 weeks prior to last menstrual period onward) to Novartis by dialing 21222872 or visiting <https://psi.novartis.com> in order to allow monitoring of these patients through the Pregnancy Outcomes Intensive Monitoring Program (PRIM).
- Vigilance for basal cell carcinoma is recommended

### After treatment discontinuation

- Repeat first-dose monitoring as for treatment initiation when treatment is interrupted for
  - One day or more during the first 2 weeks of treatment
  - More than 7 days during weeks 3 and 4 of treatment
  - More than 2 weeks after one month of treatment
- Counsel patients to report signs and symptoms of infection for up to 2 months after discontinuation
- Counsel patients that effective contraception is needed for 2 months after discontinuation

# Summary of Prescribing Information

GILENYA<sup>®</sup> (fingolimod)

▼ This medicinal product is subject to additional monitoring. This will allow quick identification of new safety information. Healthcare professionals are asked to report any suspected adverse reactions. See section 4.8 of the SmPC for how to report adverse reactions.

**PRESENTATION:** Hard capsule containing 0.5 mg fingolimod (as hydrochloride).

**INDICATIONS:** Gilenya is indicated as single disease modifying therapy in highly active relapsing remitting multiple sclerosis for the following adult patient groups: Patients with highly active disease despite a full and adequate course of treatment with at least one disease modifying therapy or Patients with rapidly evolving severe relapsing remitting multiple sclerosis defined by 2 or more disabling relapses in one year, and with 1 or more Gadolinium enhancing lesions on brain MRI or a significant increase in T2 lesion load as compared to a previous recent MRI.

**DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION:** Treatment should be initiated and supervised by a physician experienced in multiple sclerosis. One 0.5 mg capsule to be taken orally once daily. Use with caution in patients aged 65 years and over. Safety and efficacy of Gilenya in children up to 18 years has not been established. The same first dose monitoring as for treatment initiation is recommended when treatment is interrupted for: 1 day or more during the first 2 weeks of treatment, more than 7 days during weeks 3 and 4 of treatment, more than 2 weeks after one month of treatment. If the treatment interruption is of shorter duration than the above, the treatment should be continued with the next dose as planned.

**CONTRAINDICATIONS:** Known immunodeficiency syndrome, patients with increased risk for opportunistic infections, including immunocompromised patients (including those currently receiving immunosuppressive therapies or those immunocompromised by prior therapies), severe active infections, active chronic infections (hepatitis, tuberculosis), known active malignancies, severe liver impairment (Child-Pugh class C), hypersensitivity to the active substance or to any of the excipients.

**WARNINGS/PRECAUTIONS:** ♦**Bradycardia:** Initiation of treatment results in a transient decrease in heart rate which may be associated with atrioventricular conduction delays, including the occurrence of isolated reports of transient, spontaneously resolving complete AV block. After the first dose, the decline in heart rate starts within one hour and is maximal within 6 hours. This post-dose effect persists over the following days, although usually to a milder extent, and usually abates over the next weeks. With continued administration, the average heart rate returns towards baseline within one month. However individual patients may not return to baseline heart rate by the end of the first month. Conduction abnormalities were typically transient and asymptomatic. They usually did not require treatment and resolved within the first 24 hours on treatment. If necessary, the decrease in heart rate induced by fingolimod can be reversed by parenteral doses of atropine or isoprenaline. All patients should have an ECG and blood pressure measurement performed prior to and 6 hours after the first dose of Gilenya. All patients should be monitored for a period of 6 hours for signs and symptoms of bradycardia with hourly heart rate and blood pressure measurement. Continuous (real time) ECG monitoring during this 6 hour period is recommended. In the event of bradycardia-related symptoms, initiate appropriate clinical management and monitoring until symptoms resolve. Should a patient require pharmacological intervention during the first-dose monitoring, overnight monitoring in a medical facility should be instituted and the first-dose monitoring should be repeated after the second dose of Gilenya. If the heart rate at 6 hours is the lowest since the first dose was administered (suggesting that the maximum pharmacodynamic effect on the heart may not yet be manifest), monitoring should be extended by at least 2 hours and until heart rate increases again. Additionally, if after 6 hours, the heart rate is <45 bpm, or the ECG shows new onset second degree or higher grade AV block or a QTc interval ≥500 msec, extended monitoring (at least overnight monitoring), should be performed, and until the findings have resolved. The occurrence at any time of third degree AV block should also lead to extended monitoring (at least overnight monitoring). Very rare cases of T-wave inversion have been reported. In case of T-wave inversion, the prescriber should ensure that there are no associated myocardial ischaemia signs or symptoms. If myocardial ischaemia is suspected, it is recommended to seek advice from cardiologist. The same precautions apply if Gilenya is discontinued for more than 2 weeks. Due to the risk of serious rhythm disturbances, Gilenya should not be used in patients with second degree Mobitz type II or higher AV block, sick-sinus syndrome, or sino-atrial heart block, a history of symptomatic bradycardia or recurrent syncope, or in patients with significant QT prolongation (QTc>470msec (female) or >450msec (male)). Since significant bradycardia may be poorly tolerated in patients with known ischaemic heart disease (including angina pectoris), cerebrovascular disease, history of myocardial infarction, congestive heart failure, history of cardiac arrest, uncontrolled hypertension or severe sleep apnoea, Gilenya should not be used in these patients. In such patients, treatment with Gilenya should be considered only if the anticipated benefits outweigh the potential risks. If treatment is considered, advice from a cardiologist should be sought prior to initiation of treatment in order to determine the most appropriate monitoring, at least overnight extended monitoring is recommended for treatment initiation. Gilenya should not be used concomitantly with class Ia (e.g. quinidine, disopyramide) or class III (e.g. amiodarone, sotalol) antiarrhythmic medicinal products. Since the initiation of Gilenya treatment is also associated with slowing of the heart rate, concomitant use of heart-rate lowering substances during Gilenya initiation may be associated with severe bradycardia and heart block. Because of the potential additive effect on heart rate treatment with Gilenya should not be initiated in patients who are concurrently treated with these substances. In such patients, treatment with Gilenya should be considered only if the anticipated benefits outweigh the potential risks. If treatment with Gilenya is considered, advice from a cardiologist should be sought regarding the switch to non heart-rate lowering medicinal products prior to initiation of treatment. If the heart-rate-lowering medication cannot be stopped, cardiologist's advice should be sought to determine appropriate first dose monitoring, at least overnight extended monitoring is recommended. ♦**Avoid medicinal products that may prolong QTc interval.** ♦**Infections:** Reduction of the lymphocyte count to 20-30% of baseline values occurs with Gilenya. Perform a complete blood count (CBC) at baseline and periodically during treatment, and in case of signs of infection, stop Gilenya until recovery if absolute lymphocyte count <0.2x10<sup>9</sup>/L is confirmed. Consider VZV vaccination of patients without a history of chickenpox or VZV antibody negative patients prior to commencing Gilenya. Gilenya may increase the risk of infections, including opportunistic infections. Cases of cryptococcal meningitis have been reported after 2-3 years of treatment. Patients with symptoms and signs consistent with cryptococcal meningitis should undergo prompt diagnostic evaluation. Employ effective diagnostic and therapeutic strategies in patients with symptoms of infection while on Gilenya and for 2 months after discontinuation. Progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML) has been reported under fingolimod treatment. Before initiating treatment with fingolimod, a baseline MRI should be available (usually within 3 months) as a reference. During routine MRI (in accordance with national and local recommendations), physicians should pay attention to PML suggestive lesions ♦**Macular oedema:** Macular oedema with or without visual symptoms has been reported in patients taking Gilenya. Perform an ophthalmological evaluation 3-4 months after Gilenya initiation. Evaluate the fundus, including the macula in patients reporting visual disturbances. Perform ophthalmological evaluation prior to initiating therapy and

periodically thereafter in patients with diabetes mellitus or a history of uveitis. Discontinue Gilenya if a patient develops macular oedema. ♦**Liver function:** Delay Gilenya initiation in patients with active viral hepatitis until resolution. Recent transaminase and bilirubin levels should be available before initiation of Gilenya. Increased hepatic enzymes, in particular alanine aminotransaminase (ALT) but also gamma glutamyltransferase (GGT) and aspartate transaminase (AST) have been reported in multiple sclerosis patients treated with Gilenya. Transaminase elevations, monitor liver transaminases at months 1, 3, 6, 9 and 12 and periodically thereafter. Institute more frequent monitoring if transaminases rise above 5 times the ULN, including serum bilirubin and alkaline phosphatase (ALP) measurement. Stop Gilenya treatment with repeated confirmation of liver transaminases above 5 times the ULN and only re-commence once liver transaminase values have normalised. Patients with symptoms of hepatic dysfunction should have liver enzymes checked and discontinue Gilenya if significant liver injury is confirmed. Resume Gilenya only if another cause of liver injury is determined and if the benefits of therapy outweigh the risks. Exercise caution with Gilenya use in patients with a history of significant liver disease. ♦**Serological testing:** Peripheral blood lymphocyte counts cannot be utilised to evaluate the lymphocyte subset status of a patient treated with Gilenya. Laboratory tests involving the use of circulating mononuclear cells require larger blood volumes due to reduction in the number of circulating lymphocytes. ♦**Blood pressure effects:** Gilenya can cause a mild increase in blood pressure. Monitor blood pressure regularly during Gilenya treatment. ♦**Respiratory effects:** Use Gilenya with caution in patients with severe respiratory disease, pulmonary fibrosis and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease due to minor reductions in values for forced expiratory volume (FEV<sub>1</sub>) and diffusion capacity for carbon monoxide (DLCO). ♦**Prior immunosuppressant treatment:** No washout is necessary when switching patients from interferon or glatiramer acetate to Gilenya assuming any immune effects (e.g. neutropenia) have resolved. Exercise caution when switching patients from natalizumab to Gilenya owing to the long half life of natalizumab and concomitant immune effects. ♦**Stopping therapy:** Gilenya is cleared from the circulation in 6 weeks. Caution is indicated with the use of immunosuppressants soon after the discontinuation of Gilenya due to possible additive effects on the immune system. The combination of fingolimod with potent CYP450 inducers should be used with caution. Concomitant administration with St John's wort is not recommended. Patients need to be assessed for their immunity to varicella (chickenpox) prior to Gilenya treatment. It is recommended that patients without a health care professional confirmed history of chickenpox or documentation of a full course of vaccination with varicella vaccine undergo antibody testing to varicella zoster virus (VZV) before initiating Gilenya therapy. A full course of vaccination for antibody-negative patients with varicella vaccine is recommended prior to commencing treatment with Gilenya. Initiation of treatment with Gilenya should be postponed for 1 month to allow full effect of vaccination to occur. Rare cases of posterior reversible encephalopathy syndrome (PRES) have been reported at the 0.5 mg dose in clinical trials and in the post-marketing setting. Symptoms reported included sudden onset of severe headache, nausea, vomiting, altered mental status, visual disturbances and seizure. ♦Symptoms of PRES are usually reversible but may evolve into ischaemic stroke or cerebral haemorrhage. Delay in diagnosis and treatment may lead to permanent neurological sequelae. If PRES is suspected, Gilenya should be discontinued. ♦**Basal cell carcinoma:** has been reported in patients receiving Gilenya. Vigilance for skin lesions is warranted together with a medical evaluation of the skin at initiation, after at least one year and then at least yearly.

**INTERACTIONS:** Anti-neoplastic, immunosuppressive or immune-modulating therapies should not be co-administered due to the risk of additive immune system effects. Exercise caution when switching patients from long-acting therapies with immune effects, e.g. natalizumab, teriflunomide or mitoxantrone. No increased rate of infection was seen with concomitant treatment of relapses with a short course of corticosteroids. Vaccination may be less effective during and for up to 2 months after Gilenya treatment. Avoid use of live attenuated vaccines due to infection risk. Due to potential additive effects on heart rate, treatment should not be initiated in patients receiving beta blockers, or class Ia and III antiarrhythmics, calcium channel blockers like ivabradine, verapamil or diltiazem, digoxin, anticholinesteratic agents or pilocarpine. If treatment with Gilenya is considered in such patients, advice from a cardiologist should be sought regarding the switch to non heart-rate lowering medicinal products or appropriate monitoring for treatment initiation, at least overnight monitoring is recommended, if the heart-rate-lowering medication cannot be stopped. Caution is indicated with substances that may inhibit CYP3A4. Co-administration of fingolimod with ketoconazole increases fingolimod exposure. No interaction has been observed with oral contraceptives when co-administered with fingolimod.

**ADVERSE REACTIONS:** *Very common (≥1/10):* sinusitis, Influenza,, headache, cough, diarrhoea, back pain hepatic enzyme increased. *Common (≥1/100 to <1/10):* herpes viral infections, bronchitis, tinea versicolor, Basal cell carcinoma, lymphopenia, leucopenia, depression, dizziness, migraine, blurred vision, bradycardia, atrioventricular block, hypertension, dyspnoea, eczema, alopecia, pruritus, asthenia, increased blood triglycerides. For a full list of adverse reactions please refer to the SmPC.

**PREGNANCY AND LACTATION:** There is potential for serious risk to the fetus with Gilenya. A negative pregnancy test is required before initiation of Gilenya. Female patients must use effective contraception during treatment with Gilenya and for 2 months after discontinuation. Discontinue Gilenya if a patient becomes pregnant. Fingolimod is excreted into breast milk. Women receiving Gilenya should not breast feed. Fingolimod is not associated with a risk of reduced fertility.

**LEGAL CATEGORY:** POM.

**PACK SIZES:** Blister packs containing 28 hard capsules.

**MARKETING AUTHORISATION HOLDER:** Novartis Europharm Limited, Frimley Business Park, Camberley GU16 7SR, United Kingdom

**MARKETING AUTHORISATION NUMBER:** EU/1/11/677/005.

**Please refer to Summary of Product Characteristics (SmPC) before prescribing.** Full prescribing information is available on request from Novartis Pharma Services Inc., Representative Office Malta, P.O. Box 4, Marsa, MRS 1000, Malta. Tel: +356 21222872  
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Any suspected adverse reactions and medication errors can be reported via the national Adverse Drug Reaction (ADRs) reporting system. Report forms can be downloaded from <http://www.medicinesauthority.gov.mt/adrportal> and posted to:

Medicines Authority Post-licensing Directorate,  
Sir Temi Zammit Buildings,  
Malta Life Sciences Park,  
San Gwann SGN 3000.

Or sent by e-mail to: [postlicensing.medicinesauthroity@gov.mt](mailto:postlicensing.medicinesauthroity@gov.mt).

Healthcare Professionals may also report any adverse events suspected to be associated with the use of Gilenya to:

Novartis Pharma Services Inc., Representative Office, Malta by phone on 21222872, by fax on 22487219 or by e-mail at [drug\\_safety.malta@novartis.com](mailto:drug_safety.malta@novartis.com).



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