

Novartis says EU approves expanded use of Glivec

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Swiss pharmaceutical group Novartis said Monday the European Union will allow it to expand its use of the drug Glivec to treat certain rare forms of gastrointestinal cancer.

The European Commission approved an update to the Glivec label to include 36 months of treatment after surgery "for adults with KIT (CD117)-positive [gastrointestinal stromal tumors](#) (GIST)," Novartis said in a statement.

"Gastrointestinal stromal tumors are a rare, life-threatening cancer of the [gastrointestinal tract](#)," it said.

They are often difficult to diagnose and treat because they may not cause physical symptoms.

The cancers are usually diagnosed in patients aged between 55 and 65, and are characterised by tumors of connective tissue supporting the digestive tract.

Last year Novartis said sales of Glivec reached \$4.7 billion (3.5 billion euros).

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