Merck announced the FDA approval of KEYTRUDA® (pembrolizumab) for the treatment of patients with locally advanced or metastatic esophageal or gastroesophageal junction (GEJ) (tumors with epicenter 1 to 5 centimeters above the GEJ) carcinoma that is not amenable to surgical resection or definitive chemoradiation in combination with platinum- and fluoropyrimidine-based chemotherapy.

- PD-L1 diagnostic **testing is not required** prior to initiating treatment with KEYTRUDA in these patients.

PD-L1=programmed death ligand 1.

SELECTED SAFETY INFORMATION for KEYTRUDA® (pembrolizumab) Injection 100 mg

Severe and Fatal Immune-Mediated Adverse Reactions

- KEYTRUDA is a monoclonal antibody that belongs to a class of drugs that bind to either the programmed death receptor-1 (PD-1) or the programmed death ligand 1 (PD-L1), blocking the PD-1/PD-L1 pathway, thereby removing inhibition of the immune response, potentially breaking peripheral tolerance and inducing immune-mediated adverse reactions. Immune-mediated adverse reactions, which may be severe or fatal, can occur in any organ system or tissue, can affect more than one body system simultaneously, and can occur at any time after starting treatment or after discontinuation of treatment. Important immune-mediated adverse reactions listed here may not include all possible severe and fatal immune-mediated adverse reactions.
- Monitor patients closely for symptoms and signs that may be clinical manifestations of underlying immune-mediated adverse reactions. Early identification and management are essential to ensure safe use of anti–PD-1/PD-L1 treatments. Evaluate liver enzymes, creatinine, and thyroid function at baseline and periodically during treatment. In cases of suspected immune-mediated adverse reactions, initiate appropriate workup to exclude alternative etiologies, including infection. Institute medical management promptly, including specialty consultation as appropriate.
- Withhold or permanently discontinue KEYTRUDA depending on severity of the immune-mediated adverse reaction. In general, if KEYTRUDA requires interruption or discontinuation, administer systemic corticosteroid therapy (1 to 2 mg/kg/day prednisone or equivalent) until improvement to Grade 1 or less. Upon improvement to Grade 1 or less, initiate corticosteroid taper and continue to taper over at least 1 month. Consider administration of other systemic immunosuppressants in patients whose adverse reactions are not controlled with corticosteroid therapy.

See Selected Safety Information continued below.

KEYNOTE-590

First-line Treatment of Locally Advanced Unresectable or Metastatic Esophageal Cancer/GEJ

The efficacy of KEYTRUDA was investigated in KEYNOTE-590, a multicenter, randomized, placebo-controlled trial that enrolled 749 patients with metastatic or locally advanced esophageal or GEJ (tumors with epicenter 1 to 5 centimeters above the GEJ) carcinoma who were not candidates for surgical resection or definitive chemoradiation. PD-L1 status was centrally determined in tumor specimens in all patients using the PD-L1 IHC 22C3 pharmDx kit. Patients with active autoimmune disease, a medical condition that required immunosuppression, or who received prior systemic therapy in the locally advanced or metastatic setting were ineligible. Randomization was stratified by tumor histology (squamous cell carcinoma vs. adenocarcinoma), geographic region (Asia vs. ex-Asia), and ECOG PS (0 vs. 1).

Patients were randomized (1:1) to one of the following treatment arms; all study medications were administered via intravenous infusion:

- KEYTRUDA 200 mg on Day 1 of each three-week cycle in combination with cisplatin 80 mg/m^2 IV on Day 1 of each three-week cycle for up to six cycles and FU 800 mg/m^2 IV per day on Day 1 to Day 5 of each three-week cycle, or per local standard for FU administration, for up to 24 months.
- Placebo on Day 1 of each three-week cycle in combination with cisplatin 80 mg/m^2 IV on Day 1 of each three-week cycle for up to six cycles and FU 800 mg/m^2 IV per day on Day 1 to Day 5 of each three-week cycle, or per local standard for FU administration, for up to 24 months.

Treatment with KEYTRUDA or chemotherapy continued until unacceptable toxicity or disease progression. Patients could be treated with KEYTRUDA for up to 24 months in the absence of disease progression. The major efficacy outcome measures were OS and PFS as assessed by the investigator

according to RECIST v1.1 (modified to follow a maximum of 10 target lesions and a maximum of 5 target lesions per organ). The study pre-specified analyses of OS and PFS based on squamous cell histology, CPS ≥10, and in all patients. Additional efficacy outcome measures were ORR and DoR, according to modified RECIST v1.1, as assessed
by the investigator.

The study population characteristics were: median age of 63 years (range: 27 to 94), 43% age 65 or older; 83% male; 37% White, 53% Asian, and 1% Black; 40% had an ECOG PS of 0 and 60% had an ECOG PS of 1. Ninety-one percent had M1 disease and 9% had M0 disease. Seventy-three percent had a tumor histology of squamous cell carcinoma, and 27% had adenocarcinoma.

The trial demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in OS and PFS for patients randomized to KEYTRUDA in combination with chemotherapy, compared to chemotherapy.

The table below summarizes the efficacy results for KEYNOTE-590 in all patients.

Efficacy Results in Patients with Locally Advanced Unresectable or Metastatic Esophageal Cancer in KEYNOTE-590

Endpoint	**KEYTRUDA 200 mg every 3 weeks Cisplatin FU n=373**	**Placebo Cisplatin FU n=376**
OS		
Number (%) of events	262 (70)	309 (82)
Median in months (95% CI)	12.4 (10.5, 14.0)	9.8 (8.8, 10.8)
Hazard ratio* (95% CI)	0.73 (0.62, 0.86)	
p-Value†	<0.0001	
PFS		
Number of events (%)	297 (80)	333 (89)
Median in months (95% CI)	6.3 (6.2, 6.9)	5.8 (5.0, 6.0)
Hazard ratio* (95% CI)	0.65 (0.55, 0.76)	
p-Value†	<0.0001	
Objective Response Rate		
ORR, %‡ (95% CI)	45 (40, 50)	29 (25, 34)
Number (%) of complete responses	24 (6)	9 (2.4)
Number (%) of partial responses	144 (39)	101 (27)
p-Value§	<0.0001	
Duration of Response		
Median in months (range)	8.3 (1.2+, 31.0+)	6.0 (1.5+, 25.0+)

*Based on the stratified Cox proportional hazard model
†Based on a stratified log-rank test
‡Confirmed complete response or partial response
§Based on the stratified Miettinen and Nurminen method

CPS=combined positive score; DoR=duration of response; ECOG PS=Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group performance status; FU=fluorouracil; IHC=immunohistochemistry; IV=intravenous; ORR=objective response rate; OS=overall survival; PFS=progression-free survival; RECIST v1.1=Response Evaluation Criteria in Solid Tumors v1.1.

In a pre-specified formal test of OS in patients with PD-L1 CPS ≥10 (n=383), the median was 13.5 months (95% CI: 11.1, 15.6) for the KEYTRUDA arm and 9.4 months (95% CI: 8.0, 10.7) for the placebo arm, with a hazard ratio of 0.62 (95% CI: 0.49, 0.78; p-Value <0.0001). In an exploratory analysis, in patients with PD-L1 CPS <10 (n=347), the median OS was 10.5 months (95% CI: 9.7, 13.5) for the KEYTRUDA arm and 10.6 months (95% CI: 8.8, 12.0) for the placebo arm, with a hazard ratio of 0.86 (95% CI: 0.68, 1.10).

Recommended Dosage for Esophageal Cancer

Please refer to the Prescribing Information for KEYTRUDA for information about dosing for esophageal cancer.

SELECTED SAFETY INFORMATION (*continued*)

Severe and Fatal Immune-Mediated Adverse Reactions (*continued*)

Immune-Mediated Pneumonitis

- KEYTRUDA can cause immune-mediated pneumonitis. The incidence is higher in patients who have received prior thoracic radiation. Immune-mediated pneumonitis occurred in 3.4% (94/2799) of patients receiving KEYTRUDA, including fatal (0.1%), Grade 4 (0.3%), Grade 3 (0.9%), and Grade 2 (1.3%) reactions. Systemic corticosteroids were required in 67% (63/94) of patients. Pneumonitis led to permanent discontinuation of KEYTRUDA in 1.3% (36) and withholding in 0.9% (26) of patients. All patients who were withheld reinitiated KEYTRUDA after symptom improvement; of these, 23% had recurrence. Pneumonitis resolved in 59% of the 94 patients.

Immune-Mediated Colitis

- KEYTRUDA can cause immune-mediated colitis, which may present with diarrhea. Cytomegalovirus infection/reactivation has been reported in patients with corticosteroid-refractory immune-mediated colitis. In cases of corticosteroid-refractory colitis, consider repeating infectious workup to exclude alternative etiologies. Immune-mediated colitis occurred in 1.7% (48/2799) of patients receiving KEYTRUDA, including Grade 4 (<0.1%), Grade 3 (1.1%), and Grade 2 (0.4%) reactions. Systemic corticosteroids were required in 69% (33/48); additional immunosuppressant therapy was required in 4.2% of patients. Colitis led to permanent discontinuation of KEYTRUDA in 0.5% (15) and withholding in 0.5% (13) of patients. All patients who were withheld reinitiated KEYTRUDA after symptom improvement; of these, 23% had recurrence. Colitis resolved in 85% of the 48 patients.

Hepatotoxicity and Immune-Mediated Hepatitis

KEYTRUDA as a Single Agent

- KEYTRUDA can cause immune-mediated hepatitis. Immune-mediated hepatitis occurred in 0.7% (19/2799) of patients receiving KEYTRUDA, including Grade 4 (<0.1%), Grade 3 (0.4%), and Grade 2 (0.1%) reactions. Systemic corticosteroids were required in 68% (13/19) of patients; additional immunosuppressant therapy was required in 11% of patients. Hepatitis led to permanent discontinuation of KEYTRUDA in 0.2% (6) and withholding in 0.3% (9) of patients. All patients who were withheld reinitiated KEYTRUDA after symptom improvement; of these, none had recurrence. Hepatitis resolved in 79% of the 19 patients.

Immune-Mediated Endocrinopathies

Adrenal Insufficiency

- KEYTRUDA can cause primary or secondary adrenal insufficiency. For Grade 2 or higher, initiate symptomatic treatment, including hormone replacement as clinically indicated. Withhold KEYTRUDA depending on severity. Adrenal insufficiency occurred in 0.8% (22/2799) of patients receiving KEYTRUDA, including Grade 4 (<0.1%), Grade 3 (0.3%), and Grade 2 (0.3%) reactions.

Systemic corticosteroids were required in 77% (17/22) of patients; of these, the majority remained on systemic corticosteroids. Adrenal insufficiency led to permanent discontinuation of KEYTRUDA in <0.1% (1) and withholding in 0.3% (8) of patients. All patients who were withheld reinitiated KEYTRUDA after symptom improvement.

Hypophysitis

- KEYTRUDA can cause immune-mediated hypophysitis. Hypophysitis can present with acute symptoms associated with mass effect such as headache, photophobia, or visual field defects. Hypophysitis can cause hypopituitarism. Initiate hormone replacement as indicated. Withhold or permanently discontinue KEYTRUDA depending on severity. Hypophysitis occurred in 0.6% (17/2799) of patients receiving KEYTRUDA, including Grade 4 (<0.1%), Grade 3 (0.3%), and Grade 2 (0.2%) reactions. Systemic corticosteroids were required in 94% (16/17) of patients; of these, the majority remained on systemic corticosteroids. Hypophysitis led to permanent discontinuation of KEYTRUDA in 0.1% (4) and withholding in 0.3% (7) of patients. All patients who were withheld reinitiated KEYTRUDA after symptom improvement.

Thyroid Disorders

- KEYTRUDA can cause immune-mediated thyroid disorders. Thyroiditis can present with or without endocrinopathy. Hypothyroidism can follow hyperthyroidism. Initiate hormone replacement for hypothyroidism or institute medical management of hyperthyroidism as clinically indicated. Withhold or permanently discontinue KEYTRUDA depending on severity. Thyroiditis occurred in 0.6% (16/2799) of patients receiving KEYTRUDA, including Grade 2 (0.3%). None discontinued, but KEYTRUDA was withheld in <0.1% (1) of patients.
- Hyperthyroidism occurred in 3.4% (96/2799) of patients receiving KEYTRUDA, including Grade 3 (0.1%) and Grade 2 (0.8%). It led to permanent discontinuation of KEYTRUDA in <0.1% (2) and withholding in 0.3% (7) of patients. All patients who were withheld reinitiated KEYTRUDA after symptom improvement. Hypothyroidism occurred in 8% (237/2799) of patients receiving KEYTRUDA, including Grade 3 (0.1%) and Grade 2 (6.2%). It led to permanent discontinuation of KEYTRUDA in <0.1% (1) and withholding in 0.5% (14) of patients. All patients who were withheld reinitiated KEYTRUDA after symptom improvement. The majority of patients with hypothyroidism required long-term thyroid hormone replacement.

Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus (DM), Which Can Present With Diabetic Ketoacidosis

- Monitor patients for hyperglycemia or other signs and symptoms of diabetes. Initiate treatment with insulin as clinically indicated. Withhold KEYTRUDA depending on severity. Type 1 DM occurred in 0.2% (6/2799) of patients receiving KEYTRUDA. It led to permanent discontinuation in <0.1% (1) and withholding of KEYTRUDA in <0.1% (1) of patients. All patients who were withheld reinitiated KEYTRUDA after symptom improvement.

Immune-Mediated Nephritis With Renal Dysfunction

- KEYTRUDA can cause immune-mediated nephritis. Immune-mediated nephritis occurred in 0.3% (9/2799) of patients receiving KEYTRUDA, including Grade 4 (<0.1%), Grade 3 (0.1%), and Grade 2 (0.1%) reactions. Systemic corticosteroids were required in 89% (8/9) of patients. Nephritis led to permanent discontinuation of KEYTRUDA in 0.1% (3) and withholding in 0.1% (3) of patients. All patients who were withheld reinitiated KEYTRUDA after symptom improvement; of these, none had recurrence. Nephritis resolved in 56% of the 9 patients.

Immune-Mediated Dermatologic Adverse Reactions

- KEYTRUDA can cause immune-mediated rash or dermatitis. Exfoliative dermatitis, including Stevens-Johnson syndrome, drug rash with eosinophilia and systemic symptoms, and toxic epidermal necrolysis, has occurred with anti–PD-1/PD-L1 treatments. Topical emollients and/or topical corticosteroids may be adequate to treat mild to moderate nonexfoliative rashes. Withhold or permanently discontinue KEYTRUDA depending on severity. Immune-mediated dermatologic adverse reactions occurred in 1.4% (38/2799) of patients receiving KEYTRUDA, including Grade 3 (1%) and Grade 2 (0.1%) reactions. Systemic corticosteroids were required in 40% (15/38) of patients. These reactions led to permanent discontinuation in 0.1% (2) and withholding of KEYTRUDA in 0.6% (16) of patients. All patients who were withheld reinitiated KEYTRUDA after symptom improvement; of these, 6% had recurrence. The reactions resolved in 79% of the 38 patients.

Other Immune-Mediated Adverse Reactions

- The following clinically significant immune-mediated adverse reactions occurred at an incidence of <1% (unless otherwise noted) in patients who received KEYTRUDA or were reported with the use of other anti–PD-1/PD-L1 treatments. Severe or fatal cases have been reported for some of these adverse reactions. *Cardiac/Vascular*: Myocarditis, pericarditis, vasculitis; *Nervous System*: Meningitis, encephalitis, myelitis and demyelination, myasthenic syndrome/myasthenia gravis (including exacerbation), Guillain-Barré syndrome, nerve paresis, autoimmune neuropathy; *Ocular*: Uveitis, iritis and other ocular inflammatory toxicities can occur. Some cases can be associated with retinal detachment. Various grades of visual impairment, including blindness, can occur. If uveitis occurs in combination with other immune-mediated adverse reactions, consider a Vogt-Koyanagi-Harada-like syndrome, as this may require treatment with systemic steroids to reduce the risk of permanent vision loss; *Gastrointestinal*: Pancreatitis, to include increases in serum amylase and lipase levels, gastritis, duodenitis; *Musculoskeletal and Connective Tissue*: Myositis/polymyositis, rhabdomyolysis (and associated sequelae, including renal failure), arthritis (1.5%), polymyalgia rheumatica; *Endocrine*: Hypoparathyroidism; *Hematologic/Immune*: Hemolytic anemia, aplastic anemia, hemophagocytic lymphohistiocytosis, systemic inflammatory response syndrome, histiocytic necrotizing lymphadenitis (Kikuchi lymphadenitis), sarcoidosis, immune thrombocytopenic purpura, solid organ transplant rejection.

Infusion-Related Reactions

- KEYTRUDA can cause severe or life-threatening infusion-related reactions, including hypersensitivity and anaphylaxis, which have been reported in 0.2% of 2799 patients receiving KEYTRUDA. Monitor for signs and symptoms of infusion-related reactions. Interrupt or slow the rate of infusion for Grade 1 or Grade 2 reactions. For Grade 3 or Grade 4 reactions, stop infusion and permanently discontinue KEYTRUDA.

Complications of Allogeneic Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation (HSCT)

- Fatal and other serious complications can occur in patients who receive allogeneic HSCT before or after anti–PD-1/PD-L1 treatments. Transplant-related complications include hyperacute graft-versus-host disease (GVHD), acute and chronic GVHD, hepatic veno-occlusive disease after reduced intensity conditioning, and steroid-requiring febrile syndrome (without an identified infectious cause). These complications may occur despite intervening therapy between anti–PD-1/PD-L1 treatments and allogeneic HSCT. Follow patients closely for evidence of these complications and intervene promptly. Consider the benefit vs risks of using anti–PD-1/PD-L1 treatments prior to or after an allogeneic HSCT.

Increased Mortality in Patients With Multiple Myeloma

- In trials in patients with multiple myeloma, the addition of KEYTRUDA to a thalidomide analogue plus dexamethasone resulted in increased mortality. Treatment of these patients with an anti–PD-1/PD-L1 treatment in this combination is not recommended outside of controlled trials.

Embryofetal Toxicity

- Based on its mechanism of action, KEYTRUDA can cause fetal harm when administered to a pregnant woman. Advise women of this potential risk. In females of reproductive potential, verify pregnancy status prior to initiating KEYTRUDA and advise them to use effective contraception during treatment and for 4 months after the last dose.

Adverse Reactions

- In KEYNOTE-590, when KEYTRUDA was administered with cisplatin and fluorouracil to patients with metastatic or locally advanced esophageal or GEJ (tumors with epicenter 1 to 5 centimeters above the GEJ) carcinoma who were not candidates for surgical resection or definitive chemoradiation, KEYTRUDA was discontinued due to adverse reactions in 15% of 370 patients. The most common adverse reactions resulting in permanent discontinuation of KEYTRUDA (≥1%) were pneumonitis (1.6%), acute kidney injury (1.1%), and pneumonia (1.1%). The most common adverse reactions (≥20%) with KEYTRUDA in combination with chemotherapy were nausea (67%), fatigue (57%), decreased appetite (44%), constipation (40%), diarrhea (36%), vomiting (34%), stomatitis (27%), and weight loss (24%).

Lactation

- Because of the potential for serious adverse reactions in breastfed children, advise women not to breastfeed during treatment and for 4 months after the final dose.

Before prescribing KEYTRUDA® (pembrolizumab), please read the Prescribing Information. The Medication Guide also is available.