Alecensa

Bahrain · access guide

How to access Alecensa for ALK-positive non-small-cell lung cancer from Bahrain: 2026 pathway via Bahrain oncology and regional referral

By Reserve Meds clinical & regulatory team. Last reviewed 2026-05-20.

Bahrain's adult medical oncology services run out of King Hamad University Hospital (KHUH), Salmaniya Medical Complex, and Bahrain Specialist Hospital, with established referral pathways to KFSHRC Riyadh and the NCCCR at Hamad Medical Corporation in Doha for cases requiring deeper subspecialty infrastructure. Alecensa (alectinib) is registered with Bahrain's National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA) and is part of standard first-line management for confirmed ALK-positive non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC). For a Bahraini adult with newly diagnosed ALK-positive metastatic NSCLC or with completely resected ALK-positive stage IB to IIIA disease, the operational reality is that Bahrain's molecular pathology and oncology infrastructure handle the core pathway in-country, with cross-border options to Saudi Arabia, Qatar, or the UAE available where the home centre prefers a partnership review.

This page explains how the pathway works in 2026 for a Bahrain-resident adult: who qualifies, where the diagnostic and molecular workup happens, where the prescription is written and filled, what the realistic out-of-pocket exposure band is in BHD, what to monitor on therapy, and how the multi-year treatment course settles into a Bahraini family's life.

Why Alecensa, and why now

Alecensa is alectinib, a second-generation, central-nervous-system-penetrant ALK tyrosine kinase inhibitor developed by Roche with Chugai Pharmaceutical. FDA first-line approval came in November 2017 based on the ALEX trial (median progression-free survival 34.8 months on Alecensa versus 10.9 months on crizotinib; CNS objective response rate 81 percent versus 50 percent). The April 2024 label expansion added adjuvant treatment for stage IB to IIIA ALK-positive NSCLC after complete resection, based on the ALINA trial (disease-free survival hazard ratio 0.24 favouring Alecensa).

For a Bahraini patient with confirmed ALK-positive NSCLC, Alecensa is the standard-of-care first-line ALK TKI under most institutional protocols followed by KHUH, Salmaniya, and Bahrain Specialist Hospital. The eligibility gatekeeper is biomarker confirmation: documented ALK rearrangement.

What Alecensa is, in plain language

Alecensa is an oral capsule. Four 150 mg capsules per dose, twice daily, twelve hours apart, with food. Total daily dose 1,200 mg. Room temperature storage. No infusion, no inpatient stay, no certified-centre requirement. The prescribing oncologist writes the first prescription; the dispensing pharmacy (institutional or partnered specialty) fills a 30-day or 60-day supply; the patient takes Alecensa at home.

For metastatic disease, treatment is until progression or intolerable toxicity. For the adjuvant indication, treatment is fixed at 2 years.

The mechanism: ALK rearrangement produces a constitutively active fusion protein (most commonly EML4-ALK). Alecensa binds the ATP-binding pocket of the ALK kinase domain approximately 10-fold more potently than crizotinib, achieves meaningful CNS exposure, and remains active against most resistance mutations except G1202R.

The biomarker requirement

The eligibility gate is documented ALK rearrangement by IHC, FISH, or NGS. ALK IHC capability exists at the major Bahrain pathology services (KHUH, Salmaniya, Bahrain Specialist Hospital), and confirmatory FISH or NGS is typically routed to KFSHRC molecular pathology in Riyadh, NCCCR molecular pathology in Doha, or to international reference labs (Caris Life Sciences, Foundation Medicine) for complex panels or liquid biopsy. Turnaround for the full workup is typically 2 to 6 weeks depending on the route.

If the original diagnostic biopsy did not include ALK testing, archived tissue submission or re-biopsy is standard.

Eligibility at a Bahrain oncologist's clinic

For Bahrain-resident patients, the medical oncology service applies the FDA, EMA, and major-guideline criteria:

1. Histologically confirmed NSCLC. 2. Confirmed ALK rearrangement by IHC, FISH, or NGS. 3. For metastatic indication: stage IV disease confirmed by contrast CT, PET-CT, and brain MRI. 4. For adjuvant indication: stage IB (tumour 4 cm or larger) through IIIA disease with complete resection and ALK rearrangement on resected tissue. 5. Baseline labs: CBC, comprehensive metabolic panel including LFTs, creatine kinase, bilirubin. 6. Baseline ECG with QTc and heart rate. 7. Baseline pulmonary assessment. 8. Pregnancy and lactation screen; contraception documented for women of reproductive potential. 9. Drug interaction screen including herbal products and grapefruit.

A Bahraini patient should arrive at the oncology referral with the most recent pathology, imaging, and prior treatment history. Reserve Meds organises the documentation pack.

The Bahrain prescribing and dispense picture, plainly

In 2026 the Bahrain oncology centres with active Alecensa prescribing and refill experience include:

- **King Hamad University Hospital (KHUH)**: oncology service with medical oncology and pathology capability. - **Salmaniya Medical Complex**: MoH flagship; medical oncology and the national cancer registry interface. - **Bahrain Specialist Hospital**: private-sector oncology.

The pathway:

1. **Diagnosis and molecular confirmation**: at the diagnosing centre's pathology lab; complex molecular work routed to KFSHRC Riyadh, NCCCR Doha, or international reference labs. 2. **Multidisciplinary tumour board review**: KHUH and Salmaniya run thoracic / molecular tumour boards. Documentation of rationale and treatment plan. 3. **MoH treatment-abroad option**: for cases where the treating physician prefers regional centre management or where subspecialty molecular interpretation is wanted, the MoH treatment-abroad office maintains referral relationships with KFSHRC Riyadh and Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi; the cross-border referral mechanism is mature and well-tested. 4. **Insurance pre-authorisation**: AXA Gulf, Bahrain National Insurance, GIG Bahrain, and regional Bupa products handle Alecensa on prior-authorisation; documentation requirement is ALK rearrangement and MDT recommendation. 5. **Pharmacy dispense**: the prescribing centre's pharmacy fills a 30-day or 60-day supply. Roche commercial supply runs through Cigalah and other regional distributors. 6. **Refill cycle**: monthly thereafter, with monitoring lab documentation.

Cost expectation in BHD

US list price (2026) for Alecensa at 600 mg twice daily is approximately USD 14,000 to USD 16,000 per 30-day supply, annual approximately USD 170,000 to USD 190,000. At indicative 2026 cross rates, a 30-day supply at USD 15,000 is approximately BHD 5,650, and annual cost at USD 180,000 is approximately BHD 68,000. A 2.5-year metastatic course is approximately BHD 170,000 cumulative drug cost; a 2-year adjuvant course is approximately BHD 136,000.

For Bahraini-national families on MoH coverage, Alecensa is dispensed through the institutional formulary at KHUH or Salmaniya. For expatriate residents and self-pay families, the pharmacy issues a separated quote: drug cost, monitoring labs, imaging, oncologist visits, and any Reserve Meds coordination fee disclosed in writing.

Monitoring on therapy

- **Liver function tests**: every 2 weeks for the first 3 months, then monthly. - **Creatine kinase**: every 2 weeks for the first month, then every 4 weeks. - **Heart rate and ECG**: as clinically indicated. - **Pulmonary symptoms**: any new or worsening dyspnoea, cough, or fever triggers HRCT and pulmonology input for ILD workup. - **Photosensitivity counselling**: sun avoidance and high-SPF sunscreen. - **Disease assessment**: contrast CT or PET-CT every 8 to 12 weeks; brain MRI every 12 weeks if CNS metastases at baseline.

Religious, ethical, and family-logistics framing

Alecensa is an oral small molecule. No animal-source material, no donor cells. Halal acceptability is not in question. The classical Islamic jurisprudential framework for chronic medication in life-threatening illness endorses the treatment shape.

The family-logistics burden sits in the chronicity and adherence: twice-daily dosing with food for 2 to 3 years (metastatic) or 2 years (adjuvant), with monitoring labs every 2 weeks initially. Adherence support and family co-monitoring are part of the practical handoff at first refill.

When Alecensa is not the right call

Alecensa is not appropriate for ALK-negative disease, patients with a history of clinically significant interstitial lung disease, severe hepatic impairment (Child-Pugh C), or pregnancy. For confirmed ALK-positive disease where Alecensa is not the chosen first-line, lorlatinib (third-generation, increasing first-line use based on CROWN trial) and brigatinib (second-generation alternative) are the standard alternatives. Crizotinib is rarely first-line in 2026.

What Reserve Meds does on this case

We are a US-based concierge coordinator. We are not the prescriber and not the dispensing pharmacy. On a Bahrain Alecensa case we build the document pack, coordinate the Bahrain-side oncology referral and the MoH treatment-abroad pathway if relevant, support the insurance pre-authorisation conversation, set up the first dispense at the chosen pharmacy, and stay with the case through the refill cycle. Clinical decisions remain with your treating medical oncologist and the multidisciplinary tumour board.

Reserve Meds's role

US-based concierge coordinator for cross-border specialty medicine. We are not the prescriber, not the dispensing pharmacy, and not the manufacturer. All clinical decisions remain with your treating physician.

reservemeds.com · hello@reservemeds.com