



Capecitabine (Xeloda®) (“cape-SITE-a-been”)

How drug is given: by mouth

Purpose: stop the growth of cancer cells in metastatic breast cancer, colorectal cancer, gastric cancer, and other cancers.

How to take the drug by mouth

- Take by mouth with water within 30 minutes of eating a meal.
- Swallow each tablet whole. Do not chew. If you are unable to swallow, the pharmacist will give you specific instructions.
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as possible. However, if it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular dosing schedule. **Do not double dose.**
- Your doctor may want you to take a combination of 150 mg and 500 mg tablets for each dose. It is very important that you know how to correctly take your dose. Taking the wrong tablets could result in an overdose (too much medication) or underdose (too little medication).

Storage

- Store at room temperature, away from heat and moisture.
- Keep this medicine in its original container, out of reach of children and pets.
- If you have unused oral chemotherapy pills (tablets or capsules), please return them to the pharmacy where the prescription was filled. Do not flush them down the toilet, dump in the sink, or throw away in the trash.

Things that may occur during treatment

1. The palms of your hands or the soles of your feet may become red and painful. This is called hand-foot syndrome. Tingling and peeling of the skin may occur. Avoid tight fitting shoes. Use thick (moisturizing) creams on hands and feet.
2. Mild to moderate nausea, vomiting, and loss of appetite may occur. You may be given medicine to help with this.

3. Loose stools or diarrhea may occur after the drug is given. You can take loperamide (Imodium A-D®) to help control diarrhea. You can buy this at most drug stores. It is also important to drink more fluids (water, juice, sports drinks). If these do not help within 24 hours, **call your cancer care team.**
4. Mild to moderate nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite and/or stomach pain may occur. You may be given medicine to help with this.
5. Your blood cell counts may drop. This is known as bone marrow suppression. This includes a decrease in your:
 - Red blood cells, which carry oxygen in your body to help give you energy
 - White blood cells, which fight infection in your body
 - Platelets, which help clot the blood to stop bleeding

If you have a **fever of 100.5°F (38°C) or higher**, chills, a cough, or any bleeding problems, **call your cancer care team right away.**

6. You may get mouth sores 7 to 10 days after this drug is given. It is important to keep your mouth clean. A soft-bristle toothbrush should be used for brushing your teeth. You may have a burning feeling and redness inside the mouth or on the lips. Use a **baking soda mouth rinse** 4 or 5 times a day.

Mouth Rinse Recipe:

Mix: 1 tsp **salt or baking soda** with 8 oz. glass of **water**

Your doctor may order other mouth rinses. Do not use mouthwashes that have alcohol in them because they can dry out the mouth. If you cannot eat or swallow because of this, let your cancer care team know. Check with your doctor before having any dental work done.

7. You may feel very tired, also known as fatigue. Over time, fatigue could worsen and you may feel physically weak or exhausted. This can be unrelated to activity. You may need to rest or take naps more often. Mild to moderate exercise can help you maintain energy.
8. Skin changes, such as dryness or a rash on your body, may occur. Ask your cancer care team what lotions or creams you may use.
9. You may experience hair thinning/loss.
10. Your liver may be affected by this medicine. On occasion, blood work will be taken to monitor your liver function.

Things that may occur after treatment ends (even months to years later)

- Fertility:
 - It is very important to use birth control if you are having sex, because this drug could harm an unborn baby.
 - Men can become sterile and may want to think about sperm banking prior to chemotherapy.
 - For women, your period (menstrual cycle) may not be regular for a while or may stop completely and you may not be able to get pregnant.
 - If you are concerned about any of this, please talk with your cancer care team.

Managing your oral chemotherapy schedule at home can be challenging. To help you with this, there are tools to help you keep track of your schedule and any side effects you may have. You can find these at www.dana-farber.org/OralChemoDiary.

The above information includes some, but not necessarily all, of the possible side effects of this medication. The side effects listed in this teaching sheet may not be the same ones you experience. Your side effects may be different, depending on how often you receive treatment (your schedule) and how much you receive each time (your dosage). Side effects may also vary if you are taking other medications. Please speak with your cancer care team if you have questions about possible side effects you may experience. This document should not take the place of conversations with members of your cancer care team.

If you experience any significant change in your health during or after treatment, contact a member of your cancer care team right away.

THIS SPACE RESERVED FOR WRITTEN COMMENTS OR NOTES FOR THE PATIENT AND FAMILY:



Oral Chemotherapy Fact Sheet

Oral chemotherapy medicines are given by mouth in the form of capsules, tablets, or liquid. These safety tips will help you understand what to do when you are taking oral chemotherapy.

Please note: If you are on a clinical trial, you may be given special instructions.

How to take this drug

- Swallow each tablet or capsule whole. Do not break, crush, or chew.
- Prepare your drug away from food and food prep areas.
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as possible. However, if it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular dosing schedule.
- Do not double the dose.
- If you are on a clinical trial, you will be given special instructions if you miss a dose.
- If you are unable to swallow the pill, speak with your nurse or pharmacist about other ways to take your medication.
- If you vomit or throw up your medication, call your physician for further instructions.
- Wash your hands after taking the medication. Avoid handling crushed or broken pills (tablets or capsules).

Storage

- Most oral chemotherapy medicine is stored at room temperature, away from excess heat and moisture. You will be told if the medication you are taking needs special storage or handling.
- Keep this medicine in its original container, in a safe place, away from other family medications. All medications need to be kept out of the reach of children and pets.

Disposal

- If you have unused oral chemotherapy pills (tablets or capsules), please return them to the pharmacy where the prescription was filled. Do not flush down the toilet, dump in the sink, or throw away in the trash.

Safe handling of body waste in the home after chemotherapy

- Chemotherapy stays in the body for hours or even days, and is found in vomit, urine, stool, and sweat (body wastes). Special care must be taken to prevent the patient's body waste from coming into accidental contact with the patient or caregiver.

Body wastes

Patient and caregiver:

- You can use the toilet (septic tank or city sewage) as usual. There is no research to support double flushing to prevent accidental contact (although this may be suggested for certain medications). Ask your doctor or nurse what they suggest for your medication.
- Wash your hands well with soap and water after using the toilet. If urine, vomit, or stool gets on your body, wash with soap and water. Always wear gloves when cleaning equipment or disposing waste from a urinal or commode.
- Pregnant caregivers should **not** handle patient body waste.
- It is safe for family and friends to use the same toilet, as long as all body waste is cleaned from the toilet.
- To absorb urine or stool, use a disposable, plastic-backed pad, diaper, or sheet. Change it immediately when soiled. Then wash skin with soap and water.
- If you have an ostomy, you or your caregiver may want to wear gloves when emptying or changing appliances.

Laundry

- Always wear disposable gloves when handling sheets or clothes that have been soiled with body waste.
- Soiled items should be kept and washed separately from the other laundry.

Oral chemotherapy is a serious drug that requires extra caution. If you have questions or concerns about your oral chemotherapy, do not hesitate to call your clinician. For more tips, tools and short videos to help you manage oral chemotherapy visit our web page at <http://www.dana-farber.org/oralchemo>

The materials included on this page are for informational purposes only. The content is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.

