



Temozolomide (Temodar[®])

("te moe ZOE loe mide")

How drug is given: by mouth

Purpose: To kill cancer cells in the brain and treat other cancers.

How to take the drug by mouth:

- Take this drug on an empty stomach (at least 1 hour before or 2 hours after food).
- Swallow each capsule whole; do not chew them. If you are unable to swallow the capsule, 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.**

Storage:

- Store this medicine at room temperature, away from heat and moisture. Keep this medicine in its original container, out of the reach of children and pets.

Things that may occur during treatment:

1. Nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, and/or stomach pain may occur. Nausea and vomiting may begin soon after the drug is given and may last more than 24 hours. Drugs to help with this will be given to you.
2. 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 (39°C) or higher**, chills, a cough, or any bleeding problems, tell your doctor or nurse **right away**.

3. You may get mouth sores 7 to 10 days after this drug is started. It is important to keep your mouth clean. Use a soft-bristle toothbrush when 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**

Other mouth rinses may be ordered by your doctor. Do not use mouth washes that have alcohol in them, because they will dry out the mouth. If you cannot eat or swallow because of this, let your doctor or nurse know. Check with your doctor before having any dental work done.

4. Skin changes, such as dryness or a rash on your body, may occur. Ask your doctor or nurse what lotions or creams you may use.
5. Loose stools or diarrhea may occur. You may 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, tell your doctor or nurse.
6. Mild constipation may occur after treatment begins. Please increase your fluid intake and get more fiber in your diet by eating fresh fruits and vegetables. A daily stool softener, such as docusate (Colace®) and/or laxatives such as senna (Senakot®), may be helpful. If these do not help within 48 hours, tell your doctor or nurse. Do not use bulk forming laxatives, such as Metamucil®, without talking with your doctor or nurse.
7. You may get a headache. Please talk to your doctor or nurse about what you can take for this.
8. Your body may not be able to get rid of extra fluid. This is called edema. You may notice some swelling in your arms or legs.
9. Some patients may feel very tired, also known as fatigue. You may need to rest or take naps more often. Mild to moderate exercise may also help you maintain your energy. Talk with your doctor or nurse.
10. Your hair may thin.
11. It is very important to use birth control if you are having sex, because this drug can be harmful to an unborn baby. Women should not breast-feed while receiving temozolomide. If you are concerned about any of this, please talk with your doctor or nurse.

These are only some of the possible side effects of temozolomide. 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 doctor or nurse if you have any questions.

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

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>



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