

Capecitabine (Xeloda)

About This Drug

Capecitabine is used to treat cancer. It is given orally (by mouth).

Possible Side Effects

- Decrease in the number of white blood cells, and red blood cells. This may raise your risk of infection and make you tired and weak.
- Nausea and throwing up (vomiting)
- Pain in your abdomen
- Diarrhea (loose bowel movements)
- Tiredness
- Increased total bilirubin in your blood. This may mean that you have changes in your liver function.
- Hand-foot syndrome. The palms of your hands or soles of your feet may tingle, become numb, painful, swollen, or red.
- Skin inflammation (swelling) and rash

Note: Each of the side effects above was reported in 30% or greater of patients treated with capecitabine. All possible side effects are not included. Your side effects may be different depending on your cancer diagnosis, condition, or if you are receiving other drugs in combination. Please discuss any concerns or questions with your medical team.

Warnings and Precautions

- Abnormal bleeding if you are taking blood thinners such as warfarin, which may be life threatening. Symptoms may be coughing up blood, throwing up blood (may look like coffee grounds), red or black tarry bowel movements, abnormally heavy menstrual flow, nosebleeds, or any other unusual bleeding.
- Severe diarrhea and inflammation in the colon in the setting of severely low white blood cells, which raises your risk of infection - symptoms are diarrhea, pain in your abdomen, fevers and/or chills.
- Changes in the tissue of the heart and/or heart attack, which may be life threatening. Some changes may happen that can cause your heart to have less ability to pump blood.
- Increased risk of severe and life-threatening side effects if you have a known dihydropyrimidine dehydrogenase (DPD) deficiency.
- Dehydration (lack of water in the body from losing too much fluid), which may affect how your kidneys work which can be life-threatening.

- Changes in your kidney function, which can cause kidney failure and be life-threatening.
- Severe allergic skin reaction, which can be life-threatening. You may develop blisters on your skin that are filled with fluid or a severe red rash all over your body that may be painful.
- Severe bone marrow suppression. This is a decrease in the number of white blood cells, red blood cells, and platelets. This may raise your risk of infection, make you tired and weak, and raise your risk of bleeding
- Increased bilirubin and changes in your liver function

Note: Some of the side effects above are very rare. If you have concerns and/or questions, please discuss them with your medical team.

How to Take Your Medication

- Swallow the medicine whole with water within 30 minutes after a meal. Do not break, cut, chew, or crush it.
- Take at approximately the same time each day.
- **Missed dose:** If you vomit or miss a dose, take your next dose at the regular time, and contact your doctor. Do not take 2 doses at the same time and do not double up on the next dose.
- **Handling:** Wash your hands after handling your medicine, your caretakers should not handle your medicine with bare hands and should wear latex gloves.
- This drug may be present in the saliva, tears, sweat, urine, stool, vomit, semen, and vaginal secretions. Talk to your doctor and/or your nurse about the necessary precautions to take during this time.
- Do not cut, break, or chew tablets. If you or a caregiver is accidentally exposed to the content of a broken tablet, you may develop side effects such as a skin rash, eye irritation and swelling, diarrhea, nausea and vomiting and a headache.
- If you get any of the content of a broken tablet on your skin or in your eyes, you should wash the area of the skin well with soap and water right away. Wash your eyes with flowing water for at least 15 minutes and call your doctor. If for any reason your tablets must be cut or crushed, this must be done by your pharmacist.
- **Storage:** Store this medicine in the original container at room temperature. Keep lid tightly closed.
- **Disposal of unused medicine:** Do not flush any expired and/or unused medicine down the toilet or drain unless you are specifically instructed to do so on the medication label. Some facilities have take-back programs and/or other options. If you do not have a take-back program in your area, then please discuss with your nurse or your doctor how to dispose of unused medicine.

Important Information

- It is important that you stop taking capecitabine and notify your doctor and/or nurse if you develop grade 2 diarrhea (an increase of 4-6 bowel movements per day or bowel movements at night), bloody diarrhea or severe abdominal pain and fever so they can provide you with anti-diarrheal medication and give you further instructions.

Treating Side Effects



- Drink plenty of fluids (a minimum of eight glasses per day is recommended).
- If you throw up or have diarrhea, you should drink more fluids so that you do not become dehydrated (lack of water in the body from losing too much fluid).
- If you have diarrhea, eat low-fiber foods that are high in protein and calories and avoid foods that can irritate your digestive tracts or lead to cramping.
- Ask your nurse or doctor about medicine that can lessen or stop your diarrhea.
- To help with nausea and vomiting, eat small, frequent meals instead of three large meals a day. Choose foods and drinks that are at room temperature. Ask your nurse or doctor about other helpful tips and medicine that is available to help stop or lessen these symptoms.
- Manage tiredness by pacing your activities for the day.
- Be sure to include periods of rest between energy-draining activities.
- To decrease the risk of infection, wash your hands regularly.
- Avoid close contact with people who have a cold, the flu, or other infections.
- Take your temperature as your doctor or nurse tells you, and whenever you feel like you may have a fever.
- To help decrease the risk of bleeding, use a soft toothbrush. Check with your nurse before using dental floss.
- Be very careful when using knives or tools.
- Use an electric shaver instead of a razor.
- Keeping your pain under control is important to your well-being. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you are experiencing pain.
- Avoid sun exposure and apply sunscreen routinely when outdoors.
- If you get a rash do not put anything on it unless your doctor or nurse says you may. Keep the area around the rash clean and dry. Ask your doctor for medicine if your rash bothers you.

Food and Drug Interactions

- There are no known interactions of capecitabine with food, however this medication should be taken within 30 minutes after a meal.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist about all other prescription medicines and over-the-counter medicines and dietary supplements (vitamins, minerals, herbs, and others) you are taking before starting this medicine as there are known drug interactions with capecitabine. Also, check with your doctor or pharmacist before starting any new prescription or over-the-counter medicines, or dietary supplements to make sure that there are no interactions.
- There are known interactions of capecitabine with blood thinning medicine such as warfarin. Ask your doctor what precautions you should take.

When to Call the Doctor

Call your doctor or nurse if you have any of these symptoms and/or any new or unusual symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4° F (38° C) or higher
- Chills



- Trouble breathing
- Feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or not normal way (palpitations)
- Chest pain or symptoms of a heart attack. Most heart attacks involve pain in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes. The pain may go away and come back, or it can be constant. It can feel like pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain. Sometimes pain is felt in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach. **If any of these symptoms last 2 minutes, call 911.**
- Swelling of the legs, feet, ankles or any other part of the body
- Weight gain of 5 pounds in one week (fluid retention)
- Tiredness and/or weakness that interferes with your daily activities
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Signs of allergic reaction: swelling of the face, feeling like your tongue or throat are swelling, trouble breathing, rash, itching, fever, chills, feeling dizzy, and/or feeling that your heart is beating in a fast or not normal way. **If this happens, call 911 for emergency care.**
- Signs of abnormal bleeding such as coughing up blood, throwing up blood (may look like coffee grounds), easy bleeding or bruising, red or black tarry bowel movements, abnormally heavy menstrual flow, nosebleeds, or any other unusual bleeding
- Nausea that stops you from eating or drinking and/or is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Throwing up more than 3 times a day
- Lasting loss of appetite or rapid weight loss of five pounds in a week
- Diarrhea, 4 times in one day or diarrhea with lack of strength or a feeling of being dizzy
- Pain your abdomen that does not go away
- Signs of possible liver problems: dark urine, pale bowel movements, pain in your abdomen, feeling very tired and weak, unusual itching, or yellowing of the eyes or skin
- Decreased or very dark urine
- Painful, red, or swollen areas on your hands or feet
- Numbness and/or tingling of your hands and/or feet
- A new rash and/or itching or a rash that is not relieved by prescribed medicines
- Flu-like symptoms: fever, headache, muscle and joint aches, and fatigue (low energy, feeling weak)
- If you think you may be pregnant or may have impregnated your partner

Reproduction Warnings

- **Pregnancy warning:** This drug can have harmful effects on the unborn baby. Women of childbearing potential should use effective methods of birth control during your cancer treatment and for 6 months after stopping treatment. Men with female partners of childbearing potential should use effective methods of birth control during your cancer treatment and for 3 months after stopping treatment. Let your doctor know right away if you think you may be pregnant or may have impregnated your partner.
- **Breastfeeding warning:** Women should not breastfeed during treatment and for 1 week after stopping treatment because this drug could enter the breast milk and cause harm to a breastfeeding baby.



- **Fertility warning:** In men and women both, this drug may affect your ability to have children in the future. Talk with your doctor or nurse if you plan to have children. Ask for information on sperm or egg banking.

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