

# Capecitabine

Xeloda®

**Chemotherapy** tablets

## Understanding your treatment

What is chemotherapy?

Chemotherapy is a treatment against cancer that uses drugs to kill cancer cells. Chemotherapy can be used alone or in combination with other treatments such as radiotherapy.

How can chemotherapy help you?

Depending on your type of cancer and the stage of the disease, chemotherapy can be used to :

- **Destroy** cancer cells
- **Stop** the cancer from spreading
- **Slow** the growth of cancer cells.

How will you feel while on chemotherapy?

Chemotherapy is used to kill abnormal cells in your body. It can also damage healthy cells that divide quickly. Side effects occur when healthy cells are damaged.

Not everyone has side effects and each person's experience may differ. Side effects and their severity are not representative of the treatment's effect or lack thereof.

This document presents the most frequent side effects that your treatment causes.

### Medication

#### **Capecitabine**

Tablets to take by mouth

### Administration

Take twice daily, with a glass of water within 30 minutes of the end of breakfast and dinner, for 14 consecutive days, followed by a 7-day rest.

\_\_\_\_\_ 500 mg tablets twice daily

\_\_\_\_\_ 150 mg tablets twice daily

Cycle repeated every 21 days



A **blood test** will be done prior to every treatment cycle. Depending on the results and side effects of the previous treatment, the dose of the medication might be adjusted or the treatment might be delayed.

## How to take your medication?

- Take your capecitabine tablets as prescribed twice daily with a glass of water within 30 minutes of the end of breakfast and dinner.
- Tablets must be taken whole. Do not chew, split or crush the tablets.
- **If you forget a dose**, you may take it as soon as you remember if less than 6 hours have passed since the missed dose. Do not double your next dose. However, try to take your pills at the same time every day and in the same way (within 30 minutes following a meal, with each dose being 10-12 hours apart).

## Storing and handling your medicines



- Wash your hands immediately after handling your capsules.
- Keep your medication at room temperature, out of the reach of children and pets as well as protected from light, heat or moisture. Do not keep medicines in the bathroom.
- Don't throw away unused medication at home. Bring it back to your pharmacy to be destroyed safely. You may dispose of the empty containers in your home garbage can.
- If the pills inadvertently come in contact with the surrounding surface, wash and rub the surface with water and soap.
- Caregivers should wear disposable gloves if they prepare medication for you. You can find disposable gloves at your local community pharmacy.
- Keep your medications in their original container and do not mix them with other drugs.

## How can this treatment affect your daily life?

### Fatigue and appetite



- You may experience **fatigue** during your treatments. This is usually temporary and may be related to different reasons (medication, stress, the disease). Maintain a good level of activity but rest when you feel the need to.
- Your **appetite may diminish**. Eat more often, in smaller quantities.
- Your **sense of taste may be altered**. Enhance foods with *fines herbes* or lemon juice. Eating fruits and unsweetened candies, chewing non-sugared gums, etc., may mask the metallic taste.
- **Alcohol** in small quantities is allowed and will not affect the efficacy of the treatment.



## Sex life and birth control



- You can have an **active sexual** life during your treatments. However, a decrease in your sexual drive may occur during this period. This may also be influenced by different factors (fatigue, stress, etc.).
- It's safe to kiss, to touch, to hold hands, to sleep in the same bed and to cuddle.
- For **male patients**, the production of spermatozoids may be reduced or completely absent during treatments. This reduction of fertility may be permanent, may get better or return to normal after the treatments have stopped. This reduction of **fertility** does not prevent erection or sexual activity and a pregnancy remains possible.
- The treatment may affect the sperm and it may be harmful to the embryo.
  - If you have sex with a woman of child-bearing age, a birth control method is strongly recommended during treatments.
  - Notify your doctor immediately if you had unprotected sex and your partner is pregnant.
- In **pre-menopausal female patients** chemotherapy may cause the menstrual cycle to be irregular or stop completely during treatment. The menstrual cycle may restart or return to normal after the end of treatment. The menstrual cycle may also stop permanently. However, a pregnancy remains possible and chemotherapy administered during pregnancy may harm the embryo.
  - A birth control method is strongly recommended during treatments.
  - Breast-feeding is not recommended during treatment.

## Tips and precautions



- **Sit down to urinate and fold down the toilet lid**  
Women as well as men should sit down to urinate and fold down the toilet lid before flushing in order to avoid splashing. Flush twice to make sure everything has been flushed away. Follow these precautions during your treatments and up to 48 hours after (or according to instructions from your cancer center).
- **Bodily fluids**  
The treatment you're receiving stays in your body for a few days. During that period, it's possible that a certain quantity is found in some bodily fluids or secretions that you produce, such as urine, stools, vomit, sperm and vaginal discharge. In order to protect the environment and those living with you, follow the instructions given by your cancer center about the right way to handle and dispose of the bodily fluids.



- **Over the counter medicines, natural health products and vaccines**  
Consult your healthcare team:
  - if you intend to take any other medication (with or without a prescription) or natural health products.
  - if you need to receive a vaccine.

This could decrease your treatment's efficacy or increase its side effects.

- **Always have on hand the complete list of your medications**  
Be sure to always have on hand the complete list of your medications, dietary supplements, vitamins and other natural health products. Give it to your doctor and your pharmacist. It is important to make them aware of any change.

# What are the side effects of your treatment?

This fact sheet aims to let you know the side effects most commonly seen following the administration of your treatment. Please note that when you take any medication, there is a possibility that it causes rare side effects and it is difficult to predict which patients will be affected.

## ADVERSE EFFECTS

## MANAGEMENT

### Hand and foot problems

**Hand and foot syndrome** may appear during your treatment. You may experience numbness, tingling, swelling, redness on the palms of your hands and underneath your feet. Pain, blisters, peeling of the skin may accompany these symptoms.

### To prevent this syndrome:

- Avoid wearing tight clothes or shoes. Wear absorbent sponge rubber soles, and/or gel pads to relieve pressure points.
- Pat dry your hands and feet rather than rubbing them.
- Wear light clothing or keep skin free of clothing to avoid perspiring.
- Wear rubber gloves while washing dishes.
- Wash your hands and feet in lukewarm water; avoid hot water.
- Moisturize your skin regularly using a non-perfumed emollient and thick cream.
- Avoid activities that require applying pressure and repetitive friction on your hands and feet.

### If symptoms occur:

- ✓ **Continue your treatment but contact your healthcare team if:** you have numbness, redness, or tingling on your hands and feet, but it's not painful.
- ⚠ **Stop your treatment and call your healthcare team as soon as possible if:** you have redness, swelling or peeling of the skin with pain to the hands and feet, but it does not prevent you from doing your daily activities.
- ✗ **Stop your treatment and call your healthcare team as quickly as possible or go to the Emergency Room if:** you have redness, swelling and lesions (ulcers) to the hands and feet with pain, and if it prevents you from doing your daily activities.

### Diarrhea

You may sometimes experience diarrhea.

- Drink lots of liquids (8 to 10 glasses a day) unless otherwise instructed by your doctor.
- Eat and drink often but in small quantities.
- ✓ **Continue your treatment if:** you have light diarrhea (2 to 3 additional loose stools per day compared to usual before starting your treatment). Start loperamide (Imodium®) by taking 2 tablets first followed by one tablet after each loose stool for a maximum of 8 tablets per 24-hour period. Contact a member of your healthcare team if the diarrhea does not improve after taking loperamide for 24 hours.
- ⚠ **Stop your treatment and call your healthcare team as soon as possible if:** you experience more than 4 to 6 additional

loose stools per day compared to usual before starting your treatment. Start loperamide (Imodium®) by taking 2 tablets first followed by one tablet after each loose stool for a maximum of 8 tablets per 24-hour period.

- ➔ **Stop your treatment and call your healthcare team as quickly as possible or go to the Emergency Room if:** you have 7 or more additional loose stools per day compared to usual before starting your treatment, if you are not able to hold it in (incontinence) or if you have diarrhea with a fever.

### Nausea

Nausea and vomiting, usually light, may occur during your treatment.

- You will be prescribed medication to be taken as needed if you have nausea.
- ✔ **Continue your treatment if:** you have light nausea that does not prevent you entirely from eating. Make sure to continue your medication prescribed for your nausea.
- ⚠ **Continue your treatment and call your healthcare team as soon as possible if:** you have significant nausea, experience vomiting that is partially preventing you from eating. Make sure to continue your medication prescribed for your nausea.
- ➔ **Stop your treatment and call your healthcare team as quickly as possible or go to the Emergency Room if:** you have severe nausea or repeated vomiting that prevents you completely from eating.

### Ulcers in the mouth

Ulcers in the mouth may appear during your treatment. These ulcers can also appear in the throat.

- Gently and regularly brush your teeth after each meal and at bedtime.
- To prevent this effect, rinse your mouth with a solution of water and salt with or without baking soda or mouthwash **without** alcohol found in stores. Gargle 4 times a day – after every meal and at bedtime. Do not drink or eat for one hour after you gargle.
- ✔ **Continue your treatment if:** you have mild discomfort (ulcer, sensitivity, redness, irritation) that does not prevent you from eating. Continue your mouthwash.
- ⚠ **Stop your treatment and call your healthcare team as soon as possible if:** you have moderate discomfort (redness and painful lesions) that prevents you from eating, but not completely. Continue your mouthwash.
- ➔ **Stop your treatment and call your healthcare team as quickly as possible or go to the Emergency Room if:** you have severe discomfort and pain that is bothersome enough that it prevents you almost completely from eating.

## ADVERSE EFFECTS

## MANAGEMENT

### Decrease in white blood cells

A decrease in the **white blood cells** can occur during your treatment. You could be at higher risk to contract infections during this period.

- Wash your hands often.
- During this period, avoid coming in contact with people who have contagious diseases.
- Contact a member of your healthcare team quickly if you notice any signs of infection (chills, cough, sore throat, pain while you urinate, etc.).
- In case of fever, do not take acetaminophen (Ex: Tylenol®, Atasol®) and anti-inflammatory medication (Ex: Motrin®, Advil®, Aleve®).

#### ➔ Stop your treatment and go to the Emergency Room if:

- you have a fever of 38,3 °C (101°F) or above  
or
- you have a fever of 38 °C (100,4 °F) twice an hour apart.

### Decrease in platelets

A decrease in platelets may occur during treatment. You may bruise or bleed more easily than you normally do.

- Use a tooth brush with soft bristles.
- Consult your pharmacist before taking over the counter medications containing Aspirin® or other anti-inflammatory medication (e.g. Advil®, Motrin®, Aleve®, etc.).
- Contact a member of your healthcare team if you bruise more easily than you normally do or if you have a tendency to bleed easily from the nose or the gums.

### Hair loss

Usually there is **no hair loss** with this treatment.

### Sun sensitivity

Your skin may become more sensitive to the sun.

- Avoid going into the sun.
- Use sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher.
- Wear a hat.



## RARE ADVERSE EFFECTS THAT CAN BE SEVERE OR SERIOUS

**If the following side effects occur, stop your treatment and call your healthcare team as quickly as possible or go to the Emergency Room:**

- Irregular heartbeats, chest pain and/or sudden breathlessness.
- **Severe** adverse effects in the first days of treatment such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and ulcers or pain in the mouth

PHARMACIST: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

FROM \_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_ TO \_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_ (MONDAY TO FRIDAY)

This fact sheet has been prepared by a sub-committee of the Comité national de l'évolution de la pratique des soins pharmaceutiques of the Programme québécois de cancérologie of the Ministry of Health and Social Services in consultation with the Comité de l'évolution de la pratique en oncologie of the Institut national d'excellence en santé et en services sociaux.

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# Treatment Diary | Capecitabine

CYCLE START DATE :

## LEGEND

- ✔ Continue your treatment.
- ⚠ Stop (\*except nausea : continue) your treatment and contact your healthcare team as soon as possible.
- ⊘ Stop your treatment and contact your healthcare team without delay or go to the Emergency Room.

Refer to the information sheet for more details

		TREATMENT														REST						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
(Record the number of tablets taken)	Capecitabine <u>breakfast</u> :	150 mg																				
		500 mg																				
	Capecitabine <u>supper</u> :	150 mg																				
		500 mg																				

Date (dd-mm)

HAND AND FOOT PROBLEMS		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
✔	Numbness, redness, or tingling on your hands and feet, but it's not painful.																					
⚠	Redness, swelling or peeling of the skin with pain to the hands and feet, but it does not prevent you from doing your daily activities.																					
⊘	Redness, swelling and lesions (ulcers) to the hands and feet with pain, and if it prevents you from doing your daily activities.																					
DIARRHEA		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
✔	Light diarrhea: you have 2 to 3 additional loose stools per day compared to usual.																					
⚠	Moderate diarrhea: you have 4 to 6 additional loose stools per day compared to usual.																					
⊘	Severe diarrhea: you have 7 or more additional loose stools per day compared to usual before starting your treatment or you are not able to hold it in (incontinence).																					



<b>NAUSEA AND VOMITING</b>		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	Light nausea that does not prevent you entirely from eating.																					
	Significant nausea or if you experience vomiting that is partially preventing you from eating.																					
	Severe nausea or repeated vomiting that prevents you completely from eating.																					
<b>ULCERS IN THE MOUTH</b>		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	Mild discomfort (ulcer, sensitivity, redness, irritation) that does not prevent you from eating.																					
	Moderate discomfort (redness and painful lesions) that prevents you from eating, but not completely.																					
	Severe discomfort and pain that is bothersome enough that it prevents you almost completely from eating.																					
<b>DECREASE IN WHITE BLOOD CELLS</b>		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	You have a fever of 38,3°C (101°F) or above or you have a fever of 38°C (100,4°F) twice an hour apart with or without symptoms of infection.																					