

## How to Take Temozolomide (Temodar)

*For patients at Alvord Brain Tumor Center*

*This handout explains how to take the drug temozolomide (Temodar), which is used to treat certain types of brain cancer.*

There are 2 types of Temodar therapy. *Concurrent* therapy is given while you are having radiation. *Adjuvant* therapy is given after the course of radiation is over. Your doctor has prescribed the therapy checked below:



*Take your Temodar as prescribed.*

### ❑ Concurrent Therapy

- You will take Temodar every day for 42 days (6 weeks). Do **not** take your first dose of Temodar until we review your blood tests. Your doctor or nurse will tell you when to start taking Temodar.
- Take Zofran (*ondansetron*) **30 to 60 minutes before** taking Temodar. This medicine helps prevent nausea and vomiting.
- You must have a blood draw once a week for the 6 weeks of therapy.
- You might finish the Temodar doses before your radiation treatment is over.
- Your doctor will prescribe an antibiotic (Bactrim) for you to take during therapy. This is to help prevent lung infection (*pneumonia*). You are at a higher risk of pneumonia while receiving Temodar and radiation.

### ❑ Adjuvant Therapy

- Your therapy cycle is 28 days long. At the start of the cycle, you will take Temodar every night for the first 5 days.
- Take Zofran (*ondansetron*) **30 to 60 minutes before** taking Temodar. This medicine helps prevent nausea and vomiting.
- On Day 26, you will need to have a blood draw.
- Wait to start your next cycle of Temodar until we review your blood tests. Your doctor or nurse will tell you when to start your next cycle.

## What do I need to do before starting therapy?

- You will need a blood draw.
- Women of childbearing age must take a pregnancy test.
- When you fill your prescription, you may receive more than 1 bottle. This means you will need to combine pills to make up your total dose. Check the labels to make sure they match your prescribed dose.

## How do I take Temodar?

- Swallow the capsules whole. Do **not** chew, open, or crush the capsules.
- Take Temodar:
  - At bedtime, at the same time each night.
  - On an empty stomach (2 hours after a meal or 1 hour before a meal).
  - With 8 ounces of water. Do **not** take it with any other liquid.

## What if I miss a dose?

If you miss a dose, call the phone number for your doctor's team (see the "Questions" box on page 3). Tell the nurse that you missed a dose and ask what to do.

## Are there any safety concerns?

- Temodar is a strong chemotherapy drug. Because of this:
  - Only you should touch your Temodar capsules. Wash your hands after handling them.
  - If a caregiver must handle the capsules, they must wear disposable rubber gloves and throw the gloves away after handling the drug.
- For 48 hours after you take Temodar, some of the drug may be present in your body. For safety:
  - Caregivers should wear gloves when helping in cleanup of body fluids, such as urine, stool, or vomit.

## What are possible side effects?

- **Nausea:** You will receive a prescription for the anti-nausea medicine Zofran. If Zofran does not ease your nausea, call your doctor's team.
- **Constipation:** Temodar and Zofran may cause constipation (hard stool). To prevent this problem:
  - Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated.
  - Eat foods that are high in fiber.
  - Stay active. Walk 30 minutes every day.

If constipation lasts longer than 2 days, call your doctor's team.

## Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

### If you have questions about your Temodar therapy:

- Send us a message on eCare.
- Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.:
  - ☐ For Dr. Graber's team, call 206.597.3171
  - ☐ For Dr. McGranahan's team, call 206.598.5907
  - ☐ For Dr. Taylor's team, call 206.597.3008
  - ☐ For Dr. Venur's team, call 206.598.9467

After hours and on weekends and holidays, you will be able to talk with a Community Care Line nurse or leave a message.

### To schedule appointments:

Call the ABTC front desk at 206.598.2282.

- **Decreased white blood cells:** Chemotherapy lowers white blood cell counts and puts you at risk for an infection. Call your doctor's team if you have any of these signs of infection:
  - A fever higher than 100.4°F (38°C)
  - Burning when you urinate (pee)
  - A sore that becomes red, has drainage, or doesn't heal
  - A cough that brings up mucus
- **Decreased platelet count:** Chemotherapy puts you at risk for a low platelet count or bleeding. Call your doctor's team if you have:
  - A sore that oozes even when you apply pressure
  - A lot of bleeding from your gums when you brush or floss
  - A bloody nose that lasts longer than 5 minutes
  - A lot of bruising
- **Fatigue:** You may be more tired than usual, but it is important to remain active. Try and get outside to walk about 30 minutes a day.
- **Hair loss:** You may have short-term hair loss while taking Temodar. Your hair should grow normally after treatment has ended.
- **Fertility:** Chemotherapy may affect your ability to have a child.

## Precautions

### Sex and Birth Control

During Temodar therapy:

- If you are a woman, do **not** become pregnant or breastfeed.
- If you are a man, do **not** get a partner pregnant.
- If you are of childbearing age, use birth control during therapy and for at least 1 month after your last dose.
- For 48 hours after taking Temodar, use a barrier form of protection during sex. Temodar stays in the body for 48 hours after each dose.

### Vaccines

During Temodar therapy:

- Talk with your provider before getting any vaccines.
- Avoid live vaccines.
- Do **not** have close contact with anyone who has received a live vaccine within the past 6 weeks.