

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.