

ORAL CHEMOTHERAPY EDUCATION



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TEMOZOLOMIDE

Name of your medication

Generic name — temozolomide (teh-moh-ZOH-loh-mide)

Brand name — Temodar® (TEH-moh-dar)

Common uses

Temozolomide is used to treat anaplastic astrocytoma and glioblastoma multiforme.

Temozolomide may also be used for other treatments.

Dose and schedule

Taking temozolomide as instructed is important to allow your treatment to be as effective as possible, so here are some key points to remember.

- ☐ Your dose is based on many factors, including your height and weight, overall health, and diagnosis.
- ☐ Temozolomide should be taken the same way each time, either with food or without food.
- ☐ Temozolomide may be taken at bedtime or on an empty stomach to reduce nausea and vomiting.
- ☐ Temozolomide should be taken whole and not crushed, cut, or dissolved. If you are unable to swallow temozolomide, talk to your care provider or pharmacist for possible options.
- ☐ If you miss a dose of temozolomide, **do not** take an extra dose or two doses at one time. Simply take your next dose at the regularly scheduled time. Be sure to write down if you miss a dose and let your care provider know about any missed doses.

Drug and food interactions

- ☐ Temozolomide has many drug interactions. Inform your care providers of all prescription medications, over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and herbal products.
- ☐ Talk with your care provider or pharmacist before taking new medications or supplements, or receiving any vaccines.

Storage and handling

Handle temozolomide with care. Just like when chemotherapy is given into the vein, this drug can be toxic, and exposure of the drug to others should be limited.

- ☐ Store temozolomide at room temperature (68°F–77°F) in a dry location away from light. Excursions are permitted between 59°F and 86°F.
- ☐ Keep temozolomide out of reach of children and pets.
- ☐ Leave temozolomide in the provided packaging until it is ready to be taken.
- ☐ Whenever possible, give temozolomide to yourself and follow the steps below. If a family member, friend, or caregiver needs to give the temozolomide to you, they also need to follow these steps:
 1. Wash hands with soap and water.
 2. Put on gloves to avoid touching the medication. (Gloves are not necessary if you give the drug to yourself.)

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3. Gently transfer the temozolomide from its package to a small medicine or other disposable cup.
 4. Administer the medicine immediately by mouth with water.
 5. Remove gloves and do not use them for anything else.
 6. Throw gloves and medicine cup in household trash.
 7. Wash hands with soap and water.
- ☐ If a daily pill box or pill reminder will be used, contact your care team before using:
 - The person filling the box or reminder should wear gloves (gloves are not necessary if you are filling the box or reminder).
 - When empty, the box or reminder should be washed with soap and water before refilling. Be sure to wash hands with soap and water after the task is complete, whether or not gloves are worn
 - ☐ If you have any unused temozolomide, **do not** throw it in the trash and **do not** flush it down the sink or toilet. Talk to your care provider or pharmacist about proper disposal of temozolomide,.
 - ☐ If you are traveling, put your temozolomide's packaging in a sealed plastic bag. Ask your pharmacist if any additional travel precautions are needed.

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Side Effects of Temozolomide

Below are common side effects that have been known to happen in about one third or more of patients taking temozolomide are listed on the left side of this table. You **MAY NOT** experience these side effects. Options to help manage any side effects that do occur are included on the right side of this table. These should be discussed with your care provider. If you experience any side effect you cannot manage or that is not listed here, contact your care provider.

Possible Side Effect	Management
Hair loss (alopecia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Your hair will grow back after treatment is over.Some people choose to wear scarves, caps, or wigs.A short haircut prior to treatment may help with the stress of hair loss.
Decreased white blood cells (WBCs) and increased risk of infection	<p>Your WBCs should be monitored by a simple blood test. When your WBCs are low, you are at greater risk for infection. Take the following precautions to protect yourself from infection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Wash your hands often, especially before eating and after using the bathroom.Avoid crowds and people with fevers, flu, or other infection.Bathe regularly to keep good personal hygiene. <p>Contact your care provider if you experience any signs or symptoms of an infection such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Fever (temperature more than 100.4°F or 38°C)ChillsSore throatBurning with urinationUnusual tirednessA sore that becomes red, is draining, or does not heal. <p>Check with your care provider before taking any medicine for a fever or chills.</p>
Decreased platelet count and increased risk of bleeding	<p>Your platelets should be monitored by a simple blood test. When they are low, you may bruise or bleed more easily than usual.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Use caution to avoid bruises, cuts, or burns.Blow your nose gently and do not pick your nose.Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush and maintain good oral hygiene.When shaving, use an electronic razor instead of razor blades.Use a nail file instead of nail clippers. <p>Call your care provider if you have bleeding that won't stop. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A bloody nose that bleeds for more than 5 minutes despite pressureA cut that continues to ooze despite pressureGums that bleed excessively when you floss or brush <p>Seek medical help immediately if you experience any severe headaches, blood in your urine or stool, coughing up blood, or prolonged and uncontrollable bleeding.</p> <p>You may need to take a break or "hold" your medication for medical or dental procedures. Talk to your care provider or dentist before any scheduled procedures.</p>

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Possible Side Effect	Management
Fatigue	<p>You may be more tired than usual or have less energy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay as active as possible, but know it is okay to rest, too. Try to do some activity every day. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan your activities, and do them at a time of day when you feel a bit more energetic. Avoid operating heavy machinery if you feel too tired.
Nausea or vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eat and drink slowly. Drink 8–10 glasses of water or fluid each day unless your care provider has instructed you to limit your fluid intake. Eat small, frequent meals throughout the day rather than a few large meals. Eat bland foods. Avoid spicy, fried, and greasy foods. Avoid vigorous exercise immediately after eating. Don't lay down immediately after eating. Avoid strong odors. <p>Let your provider know if you experience nausea or vomiting. Your provider may prescribe medication to help with the nausea or vomiting.</p>
Headache	<p>Ask your provider what you may use to help with this discomfort. Contact your care provider right away if your headache:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows a head injury Is severe or starts suddenly Does not go away after 3 days Is associated with vomiting, visual disturbance, neck stiffness, drowsiness, confusion, rash, weakness in an arm or leg, or numbness; or is made worse by coughing or lowering the head.
Constipation	<p>Monitor how many bowel movements you have each day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drink 8–10 glasses of water or fluid each day unless your care provider has instructed you to limit your fluid intake. Stay active and exercise, if possible. Eat foods high in fiber like raw fruits and vegetables. <p>Contact your care provider if you have not had a bowel movement in 3 or more days.</p> <p>Your care provider may recommend over-the-counter medications to help with your constipation. A daily stool softener such as docusate (Colace®) and/or laxative such as senna (Senokot®) may be helpful. If these do not help within 48 hours, tell your provider.</p>

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Possible Side Effect	Management
Decreased appetite or weight loss	<p>Talk to your provider if you notice a decrease in your weight while taking this medication.</p> <p>When you don't feel like eating, try the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eat frequent meals instead of three large meals each day.• Keep snacks nearby so you can eat when you feel hungry.• Drink liquid nutritional supplements.• Drink 8–10 glasses of water or fluid each day, especially if you are not eating, unless your care provider has instructed you to limit your fluid intake.

Serious side effects of temozolomide

- ☐ Temozolomide may cause myelosuppression, which is a condition where you have fewer red blood cells, white blood cells, or platelets. You will have regular blood tests to monitor your blood cell counts. Talk to your care team before any scheduled procedures while taking temozolomide.
- ☐ Temozolomide may increase your risk for certain blood cancers. Be sure to alert your physician if you notice any abnormal bruising or bleeding.
- ☐ Patients with newly diagnosed glioblastoma multiforme receiving temozolomide and radiotherapy for a 42-day period should take medicine to prevent a lung infection called Pneumocystis pneumonia.
- ☐ Temozolomide may be harmful to your liver. Seek medical attention if you notice yellowing of the skin or whites of your eyes, dark or brown urine, bleeding, or bruising.

If you experience ANY uncontrolled side effect, call your physician or healthcare center immediately:

(INSTITUTIONAL CONTACT INFO)

Handling body fluids and waste

Temozolomide remains in your body for several days after it is taken, so some of the drug may be present in urine, stool, sweat, or vomit. Once you have started to take temozolomide, it is important to follow the instructions below every day for as long as your treatment lasts. This will keep yourself, loved ones, and the environment as safe as possible.

- ☐ Pregnant women should avoid touching anything that may be soiled with body fluids from the patient.
- ☐ Toilet and septic systems
 - You may use the same toilet, septic tank, and/or sewer that you usually use. If you have a low-flow toilet, close the lid and flush twice to ensure all waste has been discarded.
 - If the toilet or toilet seat becomes soiled with urine, stool, or vomit, clean the surfaces before other people use the toilet.
 - Wash hands with soap and water after using the toilet.
- ☐ If you need a bedpan, be sure your caregiver knows to wear gloves to assist with cleanup and to wash the bedpan with soap and water every day.
- ☐ If you do not have good control of bladder or bowels, use a disposable pad with a plastic back, a diaper, or a sheet to absorb body waste.

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- ❑ Wash any skin that has been exposed to body waste or temozolomide with soap and water.
- ❑ Linens or clothing that are soiled with body fluids or body waste should be washed separately from other linens and clothing. If you do not have a washer, place the soiled linens in a plastic bag until they can be washed.
- ❑ Wash hands with soap and water after touching linens or clothing that may be soiled with body fluids.

Pregnancy, sexual activity, and contraception

- ❑ Women should not become pregnant and men should not get a partner pregnant while taking temozolomide. Men and women of childbearing age and potential should use effective contraception during therapy and for a minimum of 3 months after the last dose of temozolomide for males and 6 months after the last dose of temozolomide for females.
- ❑ Effective contraception could include 1 or more of the following: oral contraceptive, barrier methods, etc.
- ❑ Do not breastfeed while taking temozolomide and for 1 month after the last dose of temozolomide.
- ❑ Inform your care provider if you become pregnant.
- ❑ It is safe to hug and kiss. Special precautions may be needed for sexual activity while on oral chemotherapy. You are encouraged to talk to your care provider.

Obtaining medication

Talk with your care provider about how to obtain your temozolomide.

_____ (PHARMACY OR SPECIALTY PHARMACY CONTACT INFO)

Additional resources

Product prescribing information: www.merck.com/product/usa/pi_circulars/t/temodar_capsules/temodar_pi.pdf

Product resources: www.merck.com/product/usa/pi_circulars/t/temodar_capsules/temodar_ppi.pdf

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Additional instructions

Important notice: The Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC), Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association (HOPA), National Community Oncology Dispensing Association, Inc. (NCODA), and Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) have collaborated in gathering information for and developing this patient education guide. This guide represents a brief summary of the medication derived from information provided by the drug manufacturer and other resources. This guide does not cover all existing information related to the possible uses, directions, doses, precautions, warnings, interactions, adverse effects, or risks associated with this medication and should not substitute for the advice of a qualified healthcare professional. Provision of this guide is for informational purposes only and does not constitute or imply endorsement, recommendation, or favoring of this medication by ACCC, HOPA, NCODA, or ONS, who assume no liability for and cannot ensure the accuracy of the information presented. The collaborators are not making any representations with respect to the medications whatsoever, and any and all decisions, with respect to such medications, are at the sole risk of the individual consuming the medication. All decisions related to taking this medication should be made with the guidance and under the direction of a qualified healthcare professional.

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