

ORAL CHEMOTHERAPY EDUCATION



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TAMOXIFEN

Name of your medication

Generic name — tamoxifen citrate (tuh-MOK-sih-FEN SIH-trayt)

Brand name — Soltamox® (SOL-ta-mox) (liquid), Nolvadex® (tablet)

Approved uses

Tamoxifen is used to treat certain types of hormone-dependent breast cancer and to prevent breast cancer in some high-risk individuals.

Dose and schedule

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

- Your dose may vary, but the usual dose of tamoxifen is 20 milligrams (20 mg) to be taken by mouth at a scheduled time once a day.
- Tamoxifen can be taken with or without food but at the same time each day.
- If you are unable to swallow tamoxifen, talk to your care provider or pharmacist for possible options.
- If you miss a dose of tamoxifen, take it when you remember, then take the next dose as usual. If it is almost time to take your next dose, do not take extra tablets to make up for the missed dose. Be sure to write down if you miss a dose, and let your care provider know about any missed doses.

Drug and food interactions

- Tamoxifen 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 tamoxifen 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 tamoxifen at room temperature (68°F–77°F) in a dry location away from light.
- Keep tamoxifen out of reach of children and pets.
- Leave tamoxifen in the provided packaging until it is ready to be taken.
- Whenever possible, give tamoxifen to yourself and follow the steps below. If a family member, friend, or caregiver needs to give tamoxifen 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.)
 3. Gently transfer the tamoxifen from its package to a small medicine or other disposable cup.

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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 is used, a separate one should be used for tamoxifen. **Do not** mix other medications into the box with tamoxifen. 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 tamoxifen, **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 tamoxifen.
 - ❑ If you are traveling, put your tamoxifen in a sealed plastic bag. Ask your pharmacist if any additional travel precautions are needed.

Side Effects of Tamoxifen

The common side effects that have been known to happen in more than 30% of patients taking tamoxifen are listed in 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
Hot flashes (sudden sweating and feelings of warmth)	<p>If hot flashes are bothersome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mild, regular exercise program may help. Consult first with your care provider. • Try staying in a cool environment. • Wear layers so that you can remove outer layers when experiencing a hot flash. • Avoid or limit caffeine, spicy food, alcohol, and stress, which may worsen hot flashes. <p>Inform your care provider if your hot flashes are bothersome as there may be medications that can help.</p>
Increased vaginal discharge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If vaginal discharge is bothersome, wear a mini-pad throughout the day. • Notify your care provider if the discharge becomes bloody or has an unusual smell.
Fluid retention or swelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not stand for long periods of time. • Keep your legs elevated when sitting or lying down. • Avoid eating salty foods, which can increase swelling. • Avoid wearing tight-fitting clothing and shoes. • Weigh yourself daily. <p>Contact your care provider if you notice any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swelling in the hands, feet, or legs • Shortness of breath • Weight gain of five pounds or more in a week

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Serious side effects of tamoxifen

- Tamoxifen can increase your risk of having a stroke. It is important to know the signs and symptoms of a stroke. Pay attention to when the signs and symptoms begin, and call 911 immediately at the first sign of a stroke.
- Tamoxifen can increase your risk of having a blood clot. Seek immediate medical attention if you have sudden swelling in an arm or leg, have chest pain, or have trouble breathing.
- Tamoxifen may increase your risk of developing cancer in the uterus. Tell your care team about any vaginal bleeding, bleeding between your periods, if urinate more often, or if you feel more bloated than normal.

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

(INSTITUTIONAL CONTACT INFO)

Handling body fluids and waste

Because tamoxifen remains in your body for several days after it is taken, some of the drug may be present in urine, stool, sweat, or vomit. Once you have started to take tamoxifen, it is important to follow the instructions below every day for as long as your treatment lasts. This is to 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.
- Wash any skin that has been exposed to body waste or tamoxifen 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 tamoxifen. Men and women of childbearing age and potential should use effective contraception during therapy and for a minimum of two months after the last dose of tamoxifen.
- Do not breastfeed while taking tamoxifen and for a minimum of two months after the last dose of tamoxifen.
- 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, and you are encouraged to ask your care provider.

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Obtaining medication

- Talk with your care provider about the process for obtaining your tamoxifen.

_____ (PHARMACY OR SPECIALTY PHARMACY CONTACT INFO)

Additional resources

Product website: <http://soltamox.com>

Product prescribing information: <https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/getFile.cfm?setid=c82205a3-ae0c-4ce5-b04b-9581cd8c70d4&type=pdf>

Product resources: <https://soltamox.com/patient-resources/>

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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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