

Oral Chemotherapy

Oral chemotherapy is medicine you take by mouth to treat cancer. It may be a tablet, capsule, or liquid that you can take at home. It can work just as well as chemotherapy given through your veins.

Taking Oral Chemotherapy

- Talk with your cancer care team so you know exactly how to take your medicine. Ask them these questions:
 - How many times a day should I take this medicine?
 - How many days should I take this medicine?
 - Can I take this medicine with food?
 - Is it safe to take with my other medications?
 - What happens if I miss a dose?
- Take the medicine with a full glass of water.
- Try to take the medicine at the same time(s) each day.
- Do not break, chew, crush, or open tablets or capsules unless your cancer care team says to do so.
- Call your cancer care team right away if the following happens:
 - If you vomit within 2 hours after taking the medicine.
 - If you forget to take a dose.
- Do not change your dose or skip doses unless your cancer care team says to.
- Keep taking your medicine exactly as your cancer care team says, even if you feel better.
 - Some oral chemotherapy can interact with other medications and/or grapefruit juice. Tell your cancer care team about any prescribed or over-the-counter medicines or supplements you are taking.
 - Call your cancer care team right away if you are having any side effects.

Filling Oral Chemotherapy Prescriptions

- All oral chemotherapy needs pre-approval from your insurance company before you start. Your cancer care team will help with this process.

- Once approved, your cancer care team will let you know what the cost is. Oral chemotherapy is often times very expensive but your cancer care team can help get financial assistance if needed.
- If your insurance allows you to fill at our pharmacy, you can pick it up or you can have it delivered or mailed to your home.
- Your cancer care team will help you find a pharmacy who can fill your medication if our pharmacy cannot. It is usually a mail-order pharmacy that will send the medicine directly to your home.

Storing Oral Chemotherapy

- Store your medicine away from moisture and heat. The bathroom is not a good place for your medicine.
- Keep your medicine at room temperature unless your cancer care team tells you not to do so.
- Store medicine out of the reach and view of children and pets.
- Keep your medicine in the original container, including the plastic zipper bag, if present.

Handling Oral Chemotherapy

- Do not share your medicine with anyone.
- Wash your hands with soap and water after handling your medicine.
- If caregivers handle your medicine, they should wear disposable gloves. Throw gloves away after each use, and then wash hands with soap and water.
- Your body fluids may contain small amounts of the medicine. These fluids include urine, vomit, diarrhea, or semen. If any gets on your skin, wash with soap and water. Caregivers should wear gloves when handling bodily fluids. Use this level of care at all times when taking the medication and up to one week after the medication is done.
- Men should sit to prevent splashing when urinating. Flush all waste and clean up any spills with soap and water. Wash your hands well with soap and water when you are done. It is safe for others to use the same toilet.

Sexual Activity

- Talk to your cancer care team about precautions with sexual activity.
- Your partner could receive small amounts of chemotherapy from your body fluids. Men should use condoms while taking these medicines to protect their partner.
- Do not get pregnant. Oral chemotherapy can harm a fetus.
 - If either person can get pregnant, use two forms of reliable birth control or do not have sex at all. Examples of reliable birth control are condoms and birth control pills.
 - Tell your cancer care team right away if you have unprotected sex.
 - Tell your cancer care team right away if you think you or your partner is pregnant.
 - Ask your cancer care team how long you need to use reliable birth control methods.
- Ask your cancer care team when it will be safe to get pregnant, if desired.

Disposing of Oral Chemotherapy

Do not put medicine or empty pill containers in the garbage or down the toilet. Here are some tips for safely getting rid of these items:

Remove your name and other patient information from the labels.

Take medicines and containers to collection sites. All University of Utah pharmacies, including the HCl pharmacy, have collection sites.

Some oral chemotherapy, like Revlimid, must be mailed to a disposal site. Ask your pharmacist for details and get free pre-paid envelopes at the HCl pharmacy.

Your pharmacist, local fire and police stations can help you find nearby collection sites.

Visit <http://useonlyasdirected.org/throw-out> for a list of collection sites in Utah.

Follow-Up Visits

You will have follow-up visits with your cancer care team during your treatment. They will check for and manage any side effects.

Your doctor may do scans or blood tests to check how well the oral chemotherapy is working.

Huntsman Cancer Institute Pharmacy

First floor of the Cancer Hospital

Call 801-585-0172 or toll free 1-877-724-9291

Huntsman Cancer Institute Financial Advocates

Call 801-213-4331