



Patient Information

How to take your Systemic Oral Anti-Cancer Treatment

Introduction

Oral anti-cancer medicines are given by mouth in the form of tablets, capsules or liquids. This leaflet provides information for patients and carers on how to handle and take your oral anti-cancer medicine safely. We will give you information about the particular medicine your doctor has prescribed.

What is an anti-cancer medicine?

An anti-cancer medicine is a treatment for cancer and other blood disorders. There are many different types depending on the type of cancer you have. They may be traditional chemotherapy medicines, these medicines can damage normal cells in the body as well as the cancer cells. Targeted agents work by aiming at the unusual parts of cancer or other abnormal cells and are less likely to damage normal cells.

Storage

- Store the tablets/capsules in the container provided and at the recommended storage temperature on the label.
- Keep all medicines in a safe place out of reach and sight of children and pets.

Safe handling

Please check that tablets/capsules are not damaged before taking them out of the container. If tablets/capsules are broken or capsules containing liquid are leaking then contact your hospital pharmacy on: 01793 605024/ 01793 60 5469.

Relatives/carers should wear disposable gloves to handle these drugs to avoid contact with the skin. If in a blister pack, the medicine can be pushed out into a medicine pot/small cup instead of wearing gloves.

- Wash hands thoroughly after taking/giving the oral chemotherapy.



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Your chemotherapy drugs should not be handled by anyone who is pregnant or planning a pregnancy unless you are taking on the advice of your medical team.

How to take the medicine

These medicines have been prescribed for your use only and **must** not be given to anyone else.

- Always **check the medication** before taking the dose.

You may need more than one type of medicine or to combine tablets/capsules of different strengths to make the dose you need. It is important to take your medication at the scheduled time and for the length of time instructed. Some medicines are taken continuously; others are taken with planned breaks, so there may be days when you will not take the medicines.

It is important that you know when to start and stop your medicines. Follow the instructions on the medicine label. If you are still unsure call the triage line on your chemotherapy ALERT card, or speak to your specialist nurse.

Check the label on your medication for any special instructions about taking it with or without food or foods to avoid.

Swallow your medication whole. Do not chew, break or open capsules.

You should only dissolve chemotherapy tablets or open these capsules if you have been given advice on how to do this safely by a chemotherapy nurse, specialist cancer pharmacist or doctor.

If you are sick after taking a dose, do not repeat the dose and take your next dose at the normal time. If this happens again, call the triage line on your chemotherapy ALERT card.

If you miss a dose:-

- Do not try and catch up or double the next dose.
- Take the next dose as usual.
- Left over tablets/capsules from missed doses should be brought back to your doctor or pharmacy.
- Do not add left over doses onto the end of your treatment.
- If you are taking any prescribed medicine, over the counter medicine, vitamin or a supplement, you should inform your medical team.

Any side effects should be reported to chemotherapy nurse or doctor. Particular attention should be paid to any side effects or symptoms linked to the medicine. In this case you should seek urgent medical advice.



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Continuation of treatment

The hospital will supply any further cycles of your anti-cancer tablets or capsules.
Do not ask for further supplies from your GP.

If you have medicines left over, please return them to the hospital pharmacy. Do not flush or throw them away.

In order to reduce waste, and if you are continuing treatment, we may ask to reschedule your next hospital visit if you have sufficient supplies at home or re-issue them in your next supply. This is particularly important if you have been prescribed a high cost medicine.

If you have any concerns or questions

- **Ring the triage line on your chemotherapy ALERT card on 01793 604348 or 01793 604400 (night & weekends)**

If you have any specific queries about your medicine, please refer to the Patient Information Leaflet included in the pack with the medicine or ask your doctor, chemotherapy nurse or specialist nurse for advice.

If after reading this information sheet you have any questions or concerns please ring us (haematology specialist nurses), on our direct line
:

01793 604341 Monday – Friday 9.00 am – 5.00 pm.

References: This leaflet has been adapted for use at the Great Western Hospital Swindon, originally written by pharmacy and nursing staff for all hospital Trusts within London Cancer Alliance. This information sheet is based on best practice and expert opinion. Published May 2015 © London Cancer Alliance 2015

This information sheet is available to order in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email gwh.pals@nhs.net

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