

## PHARMACY

Drug Information

### Capecitabine Tablet



#### What is Capecitabine?

- Capecitabine is usually used to treat breast, stomach and colon cancers.

#### How is Capecitabine Taken?

- Capecitabine is taken orally twice daily, in the morning after breakfast and then after your evening meal. The doses should be spaced 10–12 hours apart. Try not to touch the medicine with your bare hands, use the medicine cup provided to take your medicine.
- Swallow them whole with a glass of water within half an hour after a meal. Do not chew or crush the medicines.
- Inform your doctor or pharmacist if you have difficulty swallowing. They may suggest that you dissolve the Capecitabine tablets in water. In this case, dissolve a tablet in roughly 30 to 50ml glass of warm water, stir with a spoon until the tablets are completely dissolved and then drink it immediately. It may take 15-20 minutes for it to dissolve completely. The glass and spoon should be washed and kept separate from your other crockery and cooking utensils.
- If you vomit after taking Capecitabine, do not take a second dose. Inform your doctor immediately for advice. If you miss a dose of Capecitabine, take it as soon as you can if it is within 6 hours of the missed dose. If it is over 6 hours, since the missed dose, skip the missed dose and go back to the usual dosing time, do not take a double dose.

#### Can Capecitabine be Taken With Other Medications?

- Please inform your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking other medications, including Traditional Chinese Medicines, Jamu medicines or supplements.

## What are the Important Side Effects of Capecitabine?

- Medications prescribed by your doctor should be beneficial for your condition even though they may result in some inevitable side effects.

Side Effect	Management
Risk of infection can occur as Capecitabine can reduce the number of white blood cells in your blood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To reduce risk of infection:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wash your hands after toileting.</li> <li>- Avoid crowds and people who are sick.</li> <li>- Avoid raw food.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Please proceed to the A&amp;E department immediately if you experience signs of infection such as fever with a temperature of 38°C and above, chills and shivering. Avoid taking Paracetamol (Panadol®) to relieve fever. Be aware that taking Paracetamol may mask fever and hence delay treatment of infection.</li> </ul>
Bruising or bleeding can occur as Capecitabine can reduce the number of platelets in your blood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To reduce risk of bleeding problems:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do not pick your nose.</li> <li>- Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush.</li> <li>- Be aware that bleeding may take a longer time to stop.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Please proceed to the A&amp;E department immediately if you experience any severe bleeding (eg, passing a large amount of fresh blood in urine or stools, or passing black sticky stools) or significant bruising.</li> </ul>
Nausea or Vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take small, frequent meals.</li> <li>• Avoid smells that precipitate nausea.</li> </ul>

Side Effect	Management
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take medicines for nausea or vomiting prescribed by your doctor.</li> <li>• Avoid tight-fitting clothes around the waist.</li> </ul>
Mouth ulcers can occur on the tongue, the sides of the mouth or in the throat and this can lead to an infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brush your teeth gently after eating and at bedtime with a soft toothbrush.</li> <li>• Rinse and brush your dentures after eating and soak them in denture solution overnight.</li> <li>• Rinsing your mouth regularly with an alcohol-free mouth gargle or salt water may help reduce chances of infection.</li> </ul>
Diarrhoea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform your doctor if this is severe and/or does not improve with medicine use.</li> <li>• Drink at least two litres (8 cups) of fluids every day when you are having diarrhoea.</li> <li>• Avoid milk or dairy products and/or high fibre food whilst you are having diarrhoea.</li> </ul>
Hand-foot syndrome may occur during treatment. The palms of hands and soles of your feet may tingle, become red, darken, numb, painful, swollen or creases may be observed. Skin may also become dry or itchy. Nail beds may also darken.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform your doctor if blisters, severe pain or ulcers affects your normal daily activities.</li> <li>• Avoid tight-fitting shoes or rubbing pressure to hands and feet if this occurs.</li> <li>• Applying moisturizer to hands and feet liberally often may help.</li> </ul>

Side Effect	Management
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applying sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of at least 30 may help.</li> </ul>
Heart problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please proceed to the A &amp; E department immediately if you experience signs of heart problems such as shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chest pain, fast heart beat or sudden swelling of legs.</li> </ul>

If you develop rashes, facial swelling or shortness of breath after taking the medication, you could be allergic to the medication. Please seek medical attention immediately.

#### Are There any Special Precautions That I Need to Take?

- It is important to inform your doctor if you intend to conceive or breastfeed while taking this medication.
- You must not become pregnant during treatment with Capecitabine and must use an effective method of contraception. You should take appropriate contraceptive measures during and up to 6 months after cessation of treatment. If pregnancy occurs during your treatment, you must inform your doctor immediately.
- Capecitabine may have an anti-fertility effect, which could be irreversible. You should discuss with your doctor regarding fertility preservation prior to starting treatment.
- You should not breast-feed during treatment.

#### What Else can I do to Help My Condition?

- Exercise  
Light exercise is recommended as it helps to improve mobility, balance and even emotional well-being. Do avoid strenuous exercise and rest when you are feeling tired.
- Stay positive

Understand your condition and take an active role in managing it. Do not be afraid to talk about it with your doctor/ pharmacist/ family members. Repressed feelings can be harmful to your immediate well-being and long-term health.

- Adequate hydration  
Maintain adequate hydration with two to three litres (8 to 12 cups) of fluids per day unless informed by your doctor to restrict fluids. This will decrease your chances of being constipated and also prevent dehydration.
- Medical and dental treatment  
If you need to go into hospital for any reason other than cancer, always inform the doctors and nurses that you are having chemotherapy.  
  
Talk to your cancer doctor if you think you need dental treatment. Always inform your dentist that you are having chemotherapy.

#### How do I Store Capecitabine?

- Store your medication in a cool, dry place away from heat, moisture and direct sunlight.

If you have any problem with your treatment, please contact your doctor, pharmacist or nurse clinician.

Please keep all medications out of reach of children.

You can also find useful information with regards to your medication on this website:

<https://www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support>

