

PHARMACY

Drug Information

EOX Regimen [Epirubicin, Oxaliplatin, Capecitabine (Xeloda®)]



What is EOX Regimen?

- EOX regimen is usually given for the treatment of esophagus and gastric cancer. It consists of two injections (Oxaliplatin and Epirubicin) and an oral chemotherapy drug Capecitabine.

How is EOX Regimen Administered / Taken?

- EOX regimen is given every three weekly. Oxaliplatin and Epirubicin are given by two separate injections into a vein (intravenous infusion) on the first day of the cycle, and Capecitabine is started on the evening of your intravenous chemotherapy.
- Capecitabine should be taken orally twice daily, in the morning after breakfast and then after your evening meal for 21 days each cycle without break. The doses should be spaced 10 to 12 hours apart. Try not to touch the medicine with your bare hands, use the medicine cup provided to take your medicine.
- Swallow Capecitabine with a whole 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 any difficulty swallowing. They may suggest that you dissolve a tablet in roughly 30 to 50 ml glass of warm water, stir with a spoon until the tablets are completely dissolved and then drink it immediately. It may take 15 to 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, do not take a double dose. Skip the missed dose and go back to the usual dosing time.

Can EOX Regimen be Administered / 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 EOX Regimen?

Inform the nurses immediately during infusion of EOX regimen if you experience the following:

- Allergic reaction
Oxaliplatin and Epirubicin may rarely cause an allergic reaction while it's being given. Signs of a reaction can include: a rash, flushed or shortness of breath, swelling of your face or lips, feeling dizzy, having pain in your stomach, back or chest or feeling unwell.
- Laryngeal spasm
Oxaliplatin may rarely affect the area around the voice box (larynx), resulting in difficulties with swallowing and breathing. This might happen during the treatment or in the first few days after treatment. This symptom may be worsen in cold environment so it is advisable to keep yourself warm by wearing a jacket or take hot beverage for at least 24 hours after treatment.
- Pain along the vein
Oxaliplatin and Epirubicin may cause pain at the site where the injection is given or along the vein. If you feel pain, tell your nurses straight away so they can check the site. They may give the drug more slowly or flush it through with more fluid to reduce pain.
- Drug leakage
Epirubicin may leak out of the veins and could potentially damage the tissue around the vein. This is called extravasation. Inform the nurse immediately if you have any stinging pain, redness or swelling around the vein. Extravasation is not common but if it happens it's important that it is managed quickly.
- Facial flushing
You may suddenly feel warm and your face may get red while the drug is being given. This should only last a few minutes.
- Medications prescribed by your doctor should be beneficial for your condition even though they may result in some inevitable side effects.

Side Effect	Management
Lethargy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not drive or operate machinery if you are feeling tired.

Side Effect	Management
Risk of infection can occur as EOX can reduce the number of white blood cells in your blood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reduce risk of infection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wash your hands after using toilet. - Avoid crowds and people who are sick - Do not share food and avoid taking raw food. • Please proceed to the A & E department immediately if you experience signs of an infection such as fever with a temperature above 38°C, chills, and burning sensation when passing urine. Do not take Paracetamol (Panadol®) to relieve fever unless instructed by your doctor/ nurse.
Bruising or bleeding can occur as EOX can reduce the number of platelets in your blood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reduce risk of bleeding problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Try not to bruise, cut or burn yourself - Clean your nose by blowing gently. Do not pick your nose - Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush as your gums may bleed more easily - Be aware that bleeding may take a longer time to stop • Please proceed to the A & E department immediately if you experience signs of bleeding such as blood in urine or stools, or easy bruising.
Nausea or vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small frequent meals or sucking hard, sugar-free candy may help. • Please remember to take the medicines for nausea or vomiting as instructed by your doctor.
Diarrhoea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your doctor may prescribe medicines to control diarrhoea. Inform your doctor if it is severe and/or does not improve with medicine use. • Ensure you drink at least two litres (8 cups) of fluids every day when you are having diarrhoea. • Avoid milk or dairy products and/or high fibre food whilst you are having diarrhoea.

Side Effect	Management
Hand-foot syndrome where palms of hands and soles of your feet may tingle, become red, numb, painful, or swollen. Skin may also become dry and itchy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform your doctor if blisters, severe pain or ulcers affects your normal daily activities. • Avoid tight-fitting shoes or rubbing pressure to hands and feet if this occurs • Applying sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of at least 30 may help.
Harmless red or pinkish discolouration of the urine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is expected as it is the colour of the medicine (Epirubicin) and it will last one to two days after chemotherapy.
Sensation of cramps or altered sensitivity around the mouth and throat.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep yourself warm by wearing a jacket or take hot beverages. • Avoid cold environment and cold beverages for at least 24 hours after treatment.
Rarely, changes in heart function.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may require tests to check how well your heart is working before, during and sometimes, after treatment. • If you experience pain or tightness in your chest, feel breathless or notice changes to your heartbeat at any time during or after treatment, please proceed to A&E department immediately.

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 and must use an effective contraceptive measures during and up to 6 months after the cessation of treatment. If pregnancy occurs during your treatment, you must inform your doctor immediately.

- EOX regimen 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. 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 2 to 3 litres (8 to 12 cups) of fluids per day unless informed by your doctor to restrict fluids. This will decrease your chances of getting constipation 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.

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.

