Capecitabine

- **Capecitabine** is a drug that is used to treat some types of cancers. It is a tablet that you take by mouth. The tablet contains lactose.
- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or **allergic reaction** to fluorouracil before taking capecitabine.
- A **blood test** may be taken before each treatment. The dose and timing of your chemotherapy may be changed based on your test results and/or other side effects.
- It is important to take capecitabine exactly as directed by your doctor. Make sure you understand the directions.
* You may be given tablets of more than one strength to make the right dose.
- Capecitabine is usually taken **twice daily,** about 12 hours apart with equal numbers of tablets taken at each dose.
- Capecitabine tablets should be taken **within 30 minutes following the end of a meal** (breakfast and dinner) with a glass of water.
- If you **vomit** after taking capecitabine, do not take a second dose. Call your doctor during office hours 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. Call your doctor during office hours to ask about making up the missed dose.
- Sometimes capecitabine treatment has to be **stopped for a short time** because of side effects. When you **restart** capecitabine treatment, do not make up for the missed dose; instead take as directed by your cancer doctor and finish the treatment on the same day as originally planned.
* For example, if you stop on day 3 of your 14-day treatment course and then restart, you would still take the last dose on day 14. You may be told to take a different dose and you may have extra tablets left over. Return the extra tablets to the clinic or pharmacy at your next visit. Taking a lower dose does not affect the usefulness of capecitabine.
- **Store** capecitabine tablets out of the reach of children, at room temperature, away from heat, light and moisture.
- Some drugs, herbal products and supplements may **interact** with your treatment. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any of these or before you start taking any new drugs.
- Capecitabine may damage sperm and may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. It is best to use **birth control** while being treated with capecitabine and for 6 months after treatment. Tell your doctor right away if you or your partner becomes pregnant. Do not breast feed during treatment.
- **Tell** doctors, dentists or other health care providers that you are being treated with this medication before you receive any other treatment from them.

Side effects that may occur and tips for management

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Hand-foot skin reaction may occur during capecitabine treatment. The palms of your hands and soles of your feet may tingle, become red, numb, painful, or swollen. Skin may also become dry or itchy. You may not be able to do your normal daily activities if blisters, severe pain or ulcers occur.	• Avoid tight-fitting shoes or rubbing pressure to hands and feet, such as that caused by heavy activity. • Clean hands and feet with lukewarm water and gently pat to dry; avoid hot water. • Apply lanolin-containing creams to hands and feet, liberally and often. • Tell your cancer doctor at the next visit if you have any signs of hand-foot skin reaction as your dose may need to be changed
Nausea and vomiting may occur while you are taking capecitabine. Many people have little or no nausea.	You may be given a prescription for an antinausea drug(s) to take at home. It is easier to prevent nausea than treat it once it has occurred, so follow directions closely: • Drink plenty of liquids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts.
Diarrhea may **occur during your treatment with capecitabine.**	To help diarrhea: • Drink plenty of liquids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Avoid high fiber foods • Visit National Center of Cancer Care and Research (NCCCR) urgent care unit immediately if you have four stools a day more than usual or diarrhea during the night. • Note: If lactose in milk usually gives you diarrhea, the lactose in the tablet may be causing your diarrhea. Consult your doctor.
Sore mouth may occur during treatment. Mouth sores can occur on the tongue, the sides of the mouth or in the throat. **Mouth sores or bleeding gums can lead to an infection.**	• Brush your teeth gently after eating and at bedtime with a very soft toothbrush. If your gums bleed, use gauze instead of a brush. Use baking soda instead of toothpaste. • Make a mouthwash with ½ teaspoon baking soda or salt in 1 cup warm water and rinse several times a day. • Try soft, bland foods like puddings, milkshakes and cream soups. • Avoid spicy, crunchy or acidic food, and very hot or cold foods.
Your **white blood cells** will decrease during or after treatment. White blood cells protect your body by fighting bacteria (germs) that cause infection. When they are low**, you are at greater risk of having an infection.**	To help prevent infection: • Wash your hands often and always after using the bathroom. • Take care of your skin and mouth. • Avoid crowds and people who are sick. • Visit the National Center of Cancer Care and Research (NCCCR) urgent care unit immediately at the first sign of an infection such as fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer), chills, cough, or burning when you pass urine.
Your **platelets** may decrease during or after your treatment. Platelets help to make your blood clot when you hurt yourself. **You may bruise or bleed more easily than usual.**	To help prevent bleeding problems: • Try not to bruise, cut, or burn yourself. • Clean your nose by blowing gently. Do not pick your nose. • Avoid constipation. • Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush as your gums may bleed more easily. • Maintain good oral hygiene. • Some medications such as aspirin, ibuprofen or other pain medications may increase your risk of bleeding. • For minor pain, try paracetamol (Panadol ®). • Refer to your doctor if any of these medications has been prescribed to you.

Patient education leaflet
Adapted from BC Cancer Drug (Developed: January 2001, Limited revision: 1 March 2011, 1 September 2013)
Prepared by Clinical Pharmacy Department at the National Center for Cancer Care and Research - Version 1 on May 2017

Tiredness and lack of energy may occur.	Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired.
Your **skin may sunburn** easily.	To help prevent sunburn: • Avoid direct sunlight. • Wear a hat, long sleeves and long pants or skirt outside on sunny days. • Apply a sun block lotion with an SPF (sun protection factor) of at least 30.
Hair loss is rare with capecitabine. Your hair will grow back once you stop treatment with capecitabine. Color and texture may change.	• Use a gentle shampoo and soft brush. • Apply mineral oil to your scalp to reduce itching.

SEE YOUR DOCTOR OR GET EMERGENCY HELP IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of an **infection** such as fever (over 100°F or 38°C by an oral thermometer); chills; cough; pain or burning when you pass urine.
- Signs of **bleeding problems** such as black tarry stools; blood in urine; pinpoint red spots on skin.
- Signs of **heart problems** such as fast or uneven heartbeat, chest pain, chest pressure, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, swelling of ankles, or fainting.
- **Diarrhea** with four stools a day more than usual, or diarrhea during the night.

SEE YOUR DOCTOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (DURING OFFICE HOURS) IF YOU HAVE:

- **Painful hand-foot skin reaction** such as painful redness, peeling, tingling, numbness, swelling or blistering of the palms of your hands and/or the bottoms of your feet.
- **Nausea** that causes you to eat a lot less than usual or **vomiting** more than 2 times in 24 hours.
- **Painful redness, swelling or sores on your lips, tongue, mouth or throat.**
- Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-colored stools.
- Signs of **anemia** such as unusual tiredness or weakness.
- **Severe abdominal or stomach cramping or pain**.

CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CONTINUE OR BOTHER YOU:

- Painless hand-foot skin reaction such as redness, peeling, tingling, numbness, swelling or blistering of the palms of your hands and/or bottoms of your feet.
- Painless redness, swelling or sores on your lips, tongue, mouth or throat.
- Uncontrolled nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, diarrhea or constipation.
- Skin rash or itching.
- Changes in fingernails or toenails.
- Heartburn; mild to moderate abdominal or stomach pain.
- Severe skin reaction where you have had radiation.
- Watery, irritated eyes.

REPORT ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS TO YOUR DOCTOR

This is a summary of useful information to help you understand and take your medicine safely .

We are available to answer your questions For urgent inquiries contact :

- **Urgent care unit at the National Center of Cancer Care and Research (NCCCR) TEL : 44397179 (available 24 hours, all week days).**

For further information or question contact :

- **Your doctor** (from 7 am – 3 pm) .
- **Clinical Pharmacy section,** TEL: 44397239 (Sun-Thurs from 7 am – 3 pm) .
- **Outpatient Pharmacy**, TEL: 44397531, 44397825 (Sun-Thurs from 7 am – 3 pm) .

Pharmacy Department