

## Patient Treatment Information

# Temozolomide

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Your chemotherapy treatment is called temozolomide (tem-oh-ZOHL-oh-mide) or Temodar (TEM-oh-dar). It is commonly used to treat brain cancer (glioblastoma multiforme and anaplastic astrocytoma) as well as melanoma. It has also been used to treat other diseases. Temozolomide prevents cancer cells from dividing and growing, and can eventually cause the cancer cells to shrink and die.

### What Do I Need to Know Before Starting Treatment?

Be sure to tell your healthcare provider about any prescription or over-the-counter products you are taking, including dietary supplements, vitamins, herbal medicines and homeopathic remedies.

Use an effective birth control method while you are being treated. Chemotherapy drugs can cause harm to a fetus, so be sure to tell your healthcare provider right away if you or your partner become pregnant.

Avoid breastfeeding during treatment. It is not known if temozolomide passes into breast milk.

Some chemotherapy drugs can cause sterility. Talk with your healthcare provider about your options if you want to have children in the future.

Do not get any immunizations or vaccinations while taking chemotherapy drugs without the approval of your healthcare provider.

### What Do I Need to Know Before Starting Temozolomide?

Temozolomide can lower your body's ability to fight infection, and lead to a specific type of pneumonia called *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia. Your doctor may prescribe an antibiotic to help prevent the development of this infection.

Your treatment can interact with other substances, including:

- Valproic acid

### How Is the Treatment Given?

The dose of temozolomide will vary with your diagnosis. Try to take temozolomide at around the same time every day, and on an empty stomach. Capsules should be swallowed whole with a glass of water. If you miss a dose, skip it and take the next dose as scheduled. Do not take two doses of temozolomide at the same time to try to catch up.

It is important to take temozolomide exactly as prescribed. Do not stop the medicine or change the dose without talking with your healthcare provider.

Store temozolomide at room temperature away from children and pets. If you take too much temozolomide, contact your healthcare provider, local poison control center or emergency room right away.

## What Are the Important Side Effects?

All drugs can cause side effects, but every person reacts differently to each drug. The following chart lists important side effects that can occur with your treatment, how often the side effect occurs (common, less common or rare), how to recognize and minimize side effects and possible treatments. Call your healthcare provider if you have any questions or concerns about side effects.

Potential Side Effects	How to Minimize Side Effects	Possible Treatments
<b>Nausea/Vomiting (Common)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling queasy or sick to your stomach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat small, frequent meals and bland foods—such as bananas, rice, applesauce and toast.</li> <li>• Eat food cold or at room temperature so the smell of food will not bother you.</li> <li>• Avoid fried, spicy or fatty foods.</li> <li>• Eat and drink slowly.</li> <li>• Drink plenty of liquids during the day, but to avoid bloating, do not drink during meals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You will be given medicine to help reduce nausea and vomiting.</li> </ul>
<b>Anorexia or Appetite Loss (Common)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not having an appetite</li> <li>• Feeling too nauseous to eat</li> <li>• Metallic or medicinal taste</li> <li>• Change in taste causing dislike for certain foods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try eating six to eight small meals or snacks each day instead of three larger meals.</li> <li>• Vary your diet and try new foods and recipes.</li> <li>• Take a walk before meals, when possible. This may make you feel hungrier.</li> <li>• Eat with friends or family. When eating alone, listen to the radio or watch TV.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cook dinners ahead of time and freeze them in small portions so that cooking smells are minimized.</li> <li>• Let others help with food, but ask that foods be prepared in small portions that can be frozen. And don't hesitate to let them know which foods to avoid.</li> <li>• Add mild spices to change flavor.</li> <li>• It might be helpful to have a program, such as Meals on Wheels, deliver food to you.</li> </ul>
<b>Constipation (Common)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty in passing stools</li> <li>• Decrease in the normal frequency of bowel movements</li> <li>• Small, hard dry stools</li> <li>• Bloating, gas, cramps and pain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids to help loosen your bowels. Drink warm or hot liquids if you do not have mouth sores.</li> <li>• Your healthcare provider may suggest eating foods that are high in fiber, such as bran, vegetables, whole wheat breads and fruit. Add prunes or prune juice, which act like laxatives.</li> <li>• Exercise can help loosen bowels.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your healthcare provider may recommend a stool softener.</li> </ul>
<b>Bleeding (Less Common)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unusual bleeding, easy bruising</li> <li>• Black or tar-like stools</li> <li>• Blood in your urine</li> <li>• Pinpoint red spots on your skin</li> <li>• Bleeding gums or nosebleeds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid aspirin and aspirin-like drugs, such as ibuprofen.</li> <li>• Use caution with sharp objects, such as razors and nail cutters.</li> <li>• Avoid activities that can cause cuts, bumps and bruises.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You may be given medicine to increase your platelet count.</li> <li>• Your healthcare provider may decrease your chemotherapy dose or delay further chemotherapy.</li> </ul>
<b>Diarrhea (Less Common)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loose or watery stools several times a day</li> <li>• Abdominal cramping, gas and bloating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat small, frequent meals and bland foods—such as bananas, rice, applesauce and toast.</li> <li>• Avoid caffeine; alcohol; raw fruits and vegetables; raw eggs; undercooked meats; spicy, fatty and greasy foods; milk and dairy products; foods that cause gas, such as beans and other legumes; high fiber and high-fat foods; foods left un-refrigerated for more than two hours (one hour for egg dishes and cream or mayonnaise-based foods); bulk laxatives; and stool softeners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink eight to ten glasses of clear liquids every day.</li> <li>• Your healthcare provider may prescribe medicine to help treat diarrhea.</li> </ul>

Potential Side Effects	How to Minimize Side Effects	Possible Treatments
<b>Infection (Less Common)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fever and chills</li> <li>Painful urination</li> <li>Sore throat and cough</li> <li>Nasal congestion</li> <li>Swelling or redness of the skin at the site of a wound</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wash your hands often.</li> <li>Brush and floss your teeth daily.</li> <li>Clean cuts right away with warm water, soap and antiseptic.</li> <li>When your white blood cell count is low, stay away from crowds and people with colds or other illnesses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You may be given medicine to increase your white blood cell count.</li> <li>You may be given an antibiotic to treat or prevent infection.</li> <li>Your healthcare provider may decrease your chemotherapy dose or delay further chemotherapy.</li> </ul>
<b>Anemia (Rare)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fatigue or weakness</li> <li>Dizziness</li> <li>Pale skin</li> <li>Feeling out of breath</li> <li>Feeling cold</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan rest periods throughout the day.</li> <li>Organize daily activities so that you conserve your energy.</li> <li>Try to eat a well balanced diet and drink plenty of fluids.</li> <li>Stand up slowly to avoid getting dizzy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You may be given medicine to increase your red blood cell count.</li> <li>Your healthcare provider may decrease your chemotherapy dose or delay further chemotherapy.</li> </ul>

### Are There Other Possible Side Effects?

The following chart lists additional side effects found with this treatment. It does not list all possible side effects. For more information, talk with your healthcare provider.

Common Side Effects	Less Common Side Effects	Rare Side Effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Headache</li> <li>Fatigue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weakness</li> <li>Fever</li> <li>Convulsions</li> <li>Dizziness</li> <li>Insomnia</li> <li>Numbness or tingling in extremities</li> <li>Muscle pain</li> <li>Anxiety</li> <li>Rash, itching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allergic reactions</li> <li>Erythema Multiforme, a serious skin rash</li> </ul>

### When Should I Contact My Healthcare Provider?

Contact your healthcare provider if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Vomiting that is severe or lasts several hours
- Diarrhea that causes an additional four bowel movements a day, diarrhea at night or diarrhea with fever, cramps or bloody stools
- Shaking chills or fever higher than 100.5 degrees F
- Painful or frequent urination or blood in your urine
- Unusual bleeding, easy bruising or pinpoint red spots on your skin
- Inability to eat or weight loss
- Irregular or rapid heart beat
- Chest pain, chest tightness or shortness of breath
- Dizziness or feeling lightheaded
- Pain, redness, swelling or sores in your mouth or throat that interfere with eating

