Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Temozolomide

This information from UpToDate® Lexidrug™ explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

Brand Names: US

Temodar

Brand Names: Canada

ACH-Temozolomide; JAMP-Temozolomide; TARO-Temozolomide; Temodal; Teva-Temozolomide

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat brain cancer.
- It may be given to you for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If you are allergic to dacarbazine.
- If you have a low white blood cell count or a low platelet count.
- If you are breast-feeding. Do not breast-feed while you take this drug and for 1 week after your last dose.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Have your blood work and other lab tests checked as you have been told by your doctor.
- Talk with your doctor before getting any vaccines. Use of some vaccines with this drug may either raise the chance of an infection or make the vaccine not work as well.
- If you have upset stomach, throwing up, diarrhea, or decreased appetite, talk with your doctor. There may be ways to lower these side effects.
- Low blood cell counts have happened with this drug. If counts get very low, this can lead to bleeding problems, infections, or anemia. Sometimes, these have led to hospital stays or blood transfusion. Severe low blood cell counts can be deadly. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- You may have more chance of getting an infection. Wash hands often. Stay away from people with infections, colds, or flu.
- You may bleed more easily. Be careful and avoid injury. Use a soft toothbrush and an electric razor.
- A very bad bone marrow problem and second cancer have happened with this drug. Talk with the doctor.
- If you are 70 years or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.
- This drug may affect being able to father a child. Talk with the doctor.
- This drug is found in semen. Do not donate semen while you take this drug

and for 3 months after your last dose.

- This drug may cause harm to an unborn baby. A pregnancy test will be done before you start this drug to show that you are NOT pregnant.
- If you may become pregnant, use birth control for 6 months after you get this drug. If you get pregnant, call your doctor right away.
- If your sex partner may become pregnant, use birth control while taking this drug. You will also need to use birth control for 3 months after your last dose unless you have been told otherwise. Be sure you know how long to use birth control. If your partner gets pregnant, call the doctor right away.

What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?

WARNING/CAUTION: Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

All products:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Signs of infection like fever, chills, very bad sore throat, ear or sinus pain, cough, more sputum or change in color of sputum, pain with passing urine, mouth sores, or wound that will not heal.
- Any unexplained bruising or bleeding.
- Shortness of breath, a big weight gain, or swelling in the arms or legs.
- Weakness on 1 side of the body, trouble speaking or thinking, change in balance, drooping on one side of the face, or blurred eyesight.
- Feeling confused.
- Mood changes.

- Trouble swallowing.
- Not able to control bladder.
- Memory problems or loss.
- A burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.
- Seizures.
- Change in eyesight.
- Pinpoint red spots on the skin.
- Breast pain.
- Severe and sometimes deadly liver problems have happened with this drug. Call your doctor right away if you have signs of liver problems like dark urine, tiredness, decreased appetite, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.

Injection:

- Pain, redness, or other reaction where this drug was given.

What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

- Hair loss.
- Headache.
- Feeling dizzy, sleepy, tired, or weak.
- Constipation, diarrhea, stomach pain, upset stomach, throwing up, or decreased appetite.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Back, muscle, or joint pain.
- Dry skin.

- Change in taste.
- Weight gain.
- Signs of a common cold.
- Mouth irritation or mouth sores.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at https://www.fda.gov/medwatch.

How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

Capsules:

- Take this drug at the same time of day.
- Take with or without food but take the same way each time. Always take with food or always take on an empty stomach.
- Taking this drug on an empty stomach may help prevent upset stomach. It may also help to take this drug at bedtime. Talk with the doctor.
- Other drugs may be given with this drug to help avoid side effects.
- Swallow whole. Do not chew, break, crush, or dissolve.
- Take with a full glass of water.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.
- The dose you get may be made up of 2 or more different strengths and colors of capsules.

- If you throw up after taking this drug, do not repeat the dose.
- You will need to take special care when handling this drug. Check with the doctor or pharmacist to see how to handle this drug.
- Wear gloves when touching this drug.
- If the capsule is opened or broken, do not touch the contents. Do not breathe in the contents of the capsule. If the contents are touched or get in the eyes, wash hands or eyes right away.

Injection:

- It is given as an infusion into a vein over a period of time.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

Capsules:

- Store at room temperature in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.

Injection:

- If you need to store this drug at home, talk with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about how to store it.

All products:

- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

General drug facts

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else's drugs.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of this information is governed by the Terms of Use, available at https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/clinical-effectiveness-terms.

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If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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