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## PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Temozolomide

This information from Lexicomp® 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; ACT Temozolomide; Temodal

### **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 have an allergy to temozolomide, dacarbazine, or any other part of this drug.
- If you are allergic to any drugs like this one, any other drugs, foods, or other substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had, like rash; hives; itching;

shortness of breath; wheezing; cough; swelling of face, lips, tongue, or throat; or any other signs.

This drug may interact with other drugs or health problems.

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 blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the 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 are not hungry, talk with your doctor. There may be ways to lower these side effects.
- You may have more of a chance of getting an infection. Wash hands often. Stay away from people with infections, colds, or flu. Some infections have been very bad and even

deadly.

- 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 have had hepatitis B before or carry the virus, talk with your doctor. This drug can cause the virus to become active again.
- If you are 70 years or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.
- If you are a man and have sex with a female who could get pregnant, protect her from pregnancy. Use birth control that you can trust.
- If you are a man with a sex partner who is pregnant or plans on getting pregnant at any time while you are being treated, talk with your doctor.
- This drug may cause harm to the unborn baby if you take it while you are pregnant. If you are pregnant or you get pregnant while taking this drug, call your doctor right away.
- Use birth control that you can trust to prevent pregnancy while taking this drug.
- Tell your doctor if you are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about any risks to your baby.

**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.
- Very bad headache.
- Change in eyesight.
- Pinpoint red spots on the skin.
- Very bad 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, feeling tired, not hungry, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.
- This drug may lower the ability of your bone marrow to make blood cells that your body needs. A very bad and sometimes deadly type of anemia has happened. Call your doctor right away if you have pale skin or feel very tired or weak.

### **Injection:**

- Irritation or swelling where the shot was given.
- Pain where the shot 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:

- Headache.
- Diarrhea.
- Feeling tired or weak.
- Not hungry.
- Dizziness.
- Feeling sleepy.
- Hair loss.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Not able to sleep.
- Constipation.
- Belly pain.
- Muscle or joint pain.
- Dry skin.
- Change in taste.
- Back pain.
- Weight gain.
- Signs of a common cold.

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.

## **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.
- Take with a full glass of water.
- Swallow whole. Do not chew, open, or crush.
- To gain the most benefit, do not miss doses.
- 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.
- Wear gloves when touching this drug.
- If you throw up after taking this drug, do not repeat the dose.
- If the capsule is opened or broken, do not touch the contents. If the contents are touched or they 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.
- Store 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.
- Keep a list of all your drugs (prescription, natural products, vitamins, OTC) with you. Give this list to your doctor.
- Talk with the doctor before starting any new drug, including prescription or OTC, natural products, or vitamins.
- 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.
- 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 information should not be used to decide whether or not to take this medicine or any other medicine. Only the healthcare provider has the knowledge and training to decide which medicines are right for a specific patient. This information does not endorse any medicine as safe, effective, or approved for treating any patient or health condition. This is only a brief summary of general information about this medicine. It does NOT include all information about the possible uses, directions, warnings, precautions, interactions, adverse effects, or risks that may apply to this medicine. This

information is not specific medical advice and does not replace information you receive from the healthcare provider. You must talk with the healthcare provider for complete information about the risks and benefits of using this medicine.

## **Last Reviewed Date**

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If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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