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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; TARO-Temozolomide;  
Temodal

## **What is this drug used for?**

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

## **What do I need to tell the doctor BEFORE my child takes this drug?**

- If your child is allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell the doctor about the allergy and what signs your child had.

## **If your child is breast-feeding a baby:**

- Be sure your child does not breast-feed a baby while taking this drug and for 1 week after the last dose.

This drug may interact with other drugs or health problems.

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

## **What are some things I need to know or do while my child takes this drug?**

- Tell all of your child's health care providers that your child is taking this drug. This includes your child's doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Have your child's blood work checked often. Talk with your child's doctor.
- Talk with the doctor before your child gets any vaccines. Use of some vaccines with this drug may either raise the chance of very bad infection or make the vaccine not work as well.
- If your child has an upset stomach or diarrhea, is throwing up, or is not hungry, talk with the doctor. There may be ways to

lower these side effects.

- Low blood cell counts have happened with this drug. If blood cell counts get very low, this can lead to bleeding problems, infections, or anemia. Sometimes, these have been deadly. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- Your child may have more chance of getting infections. Have your child wash hands often. Avoid crowds and people with infections, colds, or flu.
- Your child may bleed more easily. Make sure your child is careful and avoids injury. Be sure your child has a soft toothbrush.
- A very bad bone marrow problem and second cancer have happened with this drug. Talk with the doctor.
- If your child is of childbearing age, a pregnancy test will need to be done before starting this drug to make sure she is not pregnant.
- If your child is a male, be sure he does not donate semen while he takes this drug and for 3 months after his last dose.
- This drug may affect being able to father a child. Talk with the doctor.

### **If your child is or may be sexually active:**

- This drug may cause harm to the unborn baby if your child takes it during pregnancy.

- Have your child use birth control while taking this drug and for some time after the last dose. Ask the doctor how long your child must use birth control. If your child becomes pregnant, call the doctor right away.
- Males with a partner who may get pregnant must use birth control while taking this drug and for some time after the last dose. Ask your child's doctor how long to use birth control. If your child's partner gets pregnant, call the doctor right away.

### **What are some side effects that I need to call my child's 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 child's doctor or get medical help right away if your child has 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.
- Very bad and sometimes deadly liver problems have happened with this drug. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has 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.

## **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 child's doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother your child or do not go away:

- Hair loss.
- Headache.
- Feeling dizzy, sleepy, tired, or weak.
- Constipation, diarrhea, stomach pain, upset stomach, throwing up, or feeling less hungry.
- 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 child's doctor. Call your child's doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

### **How is this drug best given?**

Give this drug as ordered by your child's doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

### **Capsules:**

- Give this drug at the same time of day.
- Give this drug with or without food but give it the same way each time. Always give with food or always give on an empty stomach.
- Giving this drug on an empty stomach may help prevent upset stomach. It may also help to give this drug at bedtime. Talk with your child's doctor.
- Other drugs may be given with this drug to help avoid side effects.
- Give this drug with a full glass of water.
- Have your child swallow whole. Do not let your child chew, open, or crush.
- Keep giving this drug to your child as you have been told by your child's doctor or other health care provider, even if your

child feels well.

- The dose your child gets may be made up of 2 or more different strengths and colors of capsules.
- If your child throws 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. 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 my child misses a dose?**

- Call your child's 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 child's 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 child's symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your child's doctor.
- Do not share your child's drug with others and do not give anyone else's drug to your child.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your child's 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.

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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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