Oral chemotherapy is medicine taken by mouth to treat cancer. It may be a tablet, capsule, or liquid that you can take at home. Oral chemotherapy can be just as effective as chemotherapy given at a hospital.

**Taking Oral Chemotherapy**

Follow the instructions your health care team gives you for taking your oral chemotherapy.

- Take the medicine with a full glass of water.
- Try to take the medicine at the same time(s) each day.
- Go over these questions with your health care team so you know exactly how to take your medicine:
  1. How many times a day should I take this medicine? ________________________  ________________________
  2. For how many days should I take this medicine? ________________________
  3. Can I take this medicine with food? ________________________
  4. Can I break, chew, or crush the medicine, or should I swallow it whole? ________________________

Even if you start to feel better, keep taking your medicine exactly as prescribed.

**Storing Oral Chemotherapy**

- Store your medicine away from moisture and heat.
- Store in a safe place, out of reach and view of children and pets.
- Keep your medicine in the original pharmacy container or packaging. Avoid moving it to other containers.
- Do not share your medicine with anyone.
- Most oral chemotherapy is stored at room temperature. If it needs to be refrigerated, your health care team will tell you.

**If You Miss a Dose**

If you forget to take a dose, call your doctor's office or pharmacist as soon as you remember. They will tell you which of these instructions to follow based on your specific medicine (check one):

- □ Take the dose as soon as you remember, then continue with your regular schedule.
- □ Do not take the missed dose. Follow your regular schedule and tell your doctor about the missed dose at your next visit. Do not increase any doses to make up for a missed dose.
- □ Other: ________________________  ________________________  ________________________  ________________________

**Handling Oral Chemotherapy**

- Keep the medicine away from items that other people may touch, such as counters, dishes, or food.
- You should wash your hands with soap and water after handling your medicine.
- Caregivers should wear rubber gloves whenever handling the medicine.
- Do NOT throw unused medicine in the garbage or down the toilet. Properly dispose of unused medicine by taking it to a local collection site. Ask your pharmacist or call your local fire or police station to find collection sites near you. For a list of collection sites in Utah, visit http://www.useonlyasdirected.org/safe-disposal-drop-off-locator.

**Concerns about Other Medicines and Foods**

**Other medicines.** Oral chemotherapy can cause serious side effects when combined with certain medicines. Tell your health care team if you take any other medicines (prescription or over-the-counter) or herbal supplements. Some medicines for depression and infections may cause problems.

**Grapefruit.** Oral chemotherapy may cause more side effects when combined with grapefruit. Before you start oral chemotherapy, tell your doctor or pharmacist if you drink grapefruit juice or eat a lot of grapefruit.
**Lactose.** Tell your health care team if you are lactose intolerant. Some oral chemotherapy contains lactose.

**Other Concerns**

- Call your doctor’s office right away if you vomit within 1 to 2 hours of taking oral chemotherapy. Do not increase your dose or skip doses unless told to do so by your doctor or pharmacist.
- Small amounts of the medicine may be in bodily fluids (for example, urine, vomit, diarrhea, or semen). If you get any of these fluids on your skin, wash the area with soap and water. Caregivers should wear gloves when handling bodily fluids. Continue to follow these precautions for one week after you finish oral chemotherapy, as it can remain in the body for up to seven days.
- Use the toilet as usual. Wash your hands well with soap and water after using the toilet, and wash your skin if urine, vomit, or stool gets on other parts of your body. Others in your household may use the same toilet as long as all waste is flushed.
- Oral chemotherapy may harm a developing baby.
  - **Women** who can get pregnant should use reliable birth control while taking oral chemotherapy and for at least one month afterward. Tell your doctor right away if you think you are pregnant.
  - **Men** should use condoms while taking oral chemotherapy and for at least one month afterward. Tell your doctor right away if you have unprotected sex or think your partner might be pregnant.

**Common Side Effects**

Oral chemotherapy is strong medicine. It can cause side effects just like other types of chemotherapy. Talk to your health care team to learn what side effects are common to your medicine. Talk with your doctor if you have questions or are worried about side effects.

**Follow-Up Doctor Visits**

You will have follow-up visits with your doctor during your treatment. Your health care team will check for and manage any side effects. Your doctor may adjust the dose if needed. Only change your dose if told to do so by your doctor.

Your doctor may perform tests such as a scan or blood test to check how well the oral chemotherapy is working against your cancer.

**Filling Oral Chemotherapy Prescriptions**

- Oral chemotherapy often costs more than injected chemotherapy. Also, it may not be available at all pharmacies.
- Most insurance companies require pre-authorization. Your health care team will help with this process.
  Once your insurance approves, Huntsman Cancer Institute (HCI) staff will help find a pharmacy to fill your prescription.
- Insurance companies may require a co-payment for oral chemotherapy. HCI staff will tell you if you have a co-payment and what the amount is.
- If you need help with insurance co-payments or deductibles, assistance programs are available. Financial counselors at HCI can help you find and apply for these programs.
- Many oral chemotherapy medicines are delivered to your home or to your doctor’s office. HCI staff will let you know if your oral chemotherapy is being delivered and will arrange to have it delivered where it is most convenient for you.
- Talk with your health care team before starting oral chemotherapy if you have any questions or concerns about your insurance coverage.