

# New Connections

HELPING YOU FIND YOUR WAY THROUGH TREATMENT



Issue 17



## Oral Chemotherapy

It's more than just "popping a pill."

Oral chemotherapy is a significant breakthrough in cancer treatment. It is not only as strong and effective as injected forms of chemo, it is significantly easier for you and it puts you in greater control. However, with any new treatment of this nature come new responsibilities for you.

### Concerns to discuss with your doctor

Before starting oral chemo, discuss any concerns or questions you have with your doctor or nurse. Get answers to all of your questions about oral chemo before you begin taking it.

- | What is the name of the chemo? Is there more than one name for the same drug?
- | What can you expect it to do? How might it make you feel?
- | Are the directions for taking the drug easy to follow?
- | How is it taken? Can you swallow and keep down the pills? Can they be opened or crushed?
- | When should you take it?
- | Is it safe to take it with other drugs, food, vitamins, herbs, supplements, or other treatments you use?
- | What should you do if you miss a dose?
- | How should you store it?
- | What are the likely side effects? How should you report side effects if you have them?
- | How long will you need to take the oral chemo?
- | Will your insurance pay for oral chemo?
- | Do you have friends or family who can help you with your treatment if needed?
- | Do you have other health problems that could stop you from following your health care team's instructions? Could your other health problems make you forget to take your oral chemo?
- | Will your doctor or nurse be calling you to find out how you are doing with the chemo? How often will you need to see them in the office?

### Follow your doctor's orders

Once you have discussed all of the above, "the ball is in your court." It is critical that you adhere to the directions your doctor gives you. Not taking your chemo as you were told may cause it to not work well or even allow the cancer to grow.

Be sure to tell your doctor or nurse about any problems you have taking your chemo, including any side effects you may experience. Your doctor needs to know about any problems because changes in your treatment plan may be needed.

Though you may not be seeing your doctor and nurses very often, contact them with any questions or concerns you might have. The success of oral chemo depends upon your taking the right dose of the drug, on schedule, exactly as you were instructed. Your team is there to help you do this—they want you to succeed.

**For more cancer information, call 1-800-ACS-2345  
or visit [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org), anytime, day or night.**

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