

Taking Chemotherapy Medicines by Mouth

Some medicines, foods, and drinks can lower or change the amount of cancer-fighting medicines in the body. They can make the treatment work less well or cause unwanted things to happen. When you are taking chemotherapy medicine by mouth, be sure to talk with your oncology pharmacist. The pharmacist will help you get the most good from the medicines. He or she can also help you avoid or lessen other problems that the medicines may cause (their side effects).

Understanding How These Medicines Work

The medicines that fight cancer work by killing cancer cells in the body. In order to work well, and cause the least amount of harm, the medicines must be in a form that your body can use. They must be taken into your blood at a certain level. The level is very important. If the amount of medicine in your blood is too small, it will not kill many cancer cells. If the amount is too great, other things (side effects) may happen that could hurt rather than help your body.











Getting the Most Good from Your Treatment

You and your pharmacist can work together to help you get the most good from your treatment.

- Your pharmacist will talk to you about the other medicines or vitamins you take and also about what you eat and drink to make sure that they are not keeping the chemotherapy medicine from working.
- Your pharmacist will talk to you about how and when to take your medicines (some medicines will work better if your stomach is empty, but others work better if you eat food when you take them) and whether some foods should not be eaten at the same time you are taking the medicine.

You can help by working with your healthcare team.

- Learn about how and when to take your medicine. If you have a question, ask your oncology pharmacist.
- Keep a list of your medicines with you so that you can talk about them with your doctor or pharmacist.
- Be sure to talk to your oncology pharmacist *before* taking any new pills, even ones that you buy without a prescription. Tell your pharmacist before you take any vitamins or herbs. He or she will talk to you about things that could make your cancer medicines not work as well.
- Write down how you feel each day. If you are not feeling well, call your pharmacist, who may find ways to help you feel better.
- Visit your doctor as scheduled, and be sure to get all the tests that your doctor says you should get.
- Read and save the papers that come with your medicine or that your doctor or pharmacist gives you.

We are here to help you with your medicine!