Capecitabine and Lapatinib

What is Capecitabine (ka-pe-SITE-a-been) and how does it work?

Capecitabine is an oral chemotherapy medicine known as an “antimetabolite”. Another name for this medicine is Xeloda. Capecitabine can be given alone or with other medicines to treat cancer. It is made in a laboratory. This medicine dissolves in your digestive system and gets absorbed into your blood. Once inside the cancer cell, Capecitabine tricks the cancer cell into using it as a building block. This can stop fast growing cancer cells from dividing and making new cancer cells.

What is Lapatinib (la-PA-ti-nib) and how does it work?

Lapatinib is a type of oral, targeted cancer therapy called a “tyrosine kinase inhibitor”. Another name for this medicine is Tykerb. It is made in a laboratory. This medicine dissolves in your digestive system and gets absorbed into your blood. Lapatinib seeks out cancer cells that have HER2 receptors. Once inside these cancer cells, Lapatinib can prevent the cell from dividing and making new cancer cells.

Why am I getting 2 treatment medicines for my cancer?

Both medicines work to stop fast growing cancer cells from dividing and making new cells, but they attack the cancer cells differently. Giving the 2 medicines together makes your treatment more effective.

What should I tell my doctor before starting treatment?

Talk to your doctor about the following:

- If you have ever had chemotherapy or anti-cancer treatment and the names of the medicines you were given.
- If you have ever had liver or kidney problems.

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

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- If you have ever had changes in your heart rhythm (heart beat) or other heart problems.
- If you have low levels of potassium or magnesium.
- If you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant. Your doctor will talk with you about birth control when you take these medicines.
- If you are breastfeeding.
- If you have been told that you need to start a new medicine.
- The medicines/pills you take, including:
  - Medicines ordered by any of your doctors, including warfarin (Coumadin), phenytoin (Dilantin) or folic acid.
  - Herbs, including St. John’s Wort
  - Vitamins
  - Over-the-counter medicines

**How does my doctor decide my treatment dose?**

To determine your treatment dose, your doctor will review the following: your height, your weight, your medicines, how well your liver and kidneys work and any other health problems you have.

**Capecitabine** is taken by mouth 2 times each day for 14 days, followed by a 7 day break (21 day cycle). Or the medicine is taken 2 times each day for 7 days, followed by a 7 day break, and then repeated (28 day cycle). **Lapatinib** is taken by mouth 1 time each day. Ask your pharmacist or nurse for a medicine calendar to keep track of when you take your medicines. You will see your doctor or nurse practitioner 1 time every 3 to 4 weeks during your treatment.

**How do I handle, store and dispose of these medicines?**

- **There are special safe handling instructions for these medicines.** Talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse about the precautions you need to follow when you take these medicines at home.
- Store these medicines in a closed container at room temperature, away from heat, moisture, and direct light. Keep away from children.
- Talk with your pharmacist about how to get rid of (dispose) these medicines safely.
How do I take Capecitabine?

- You may have to take 2 different tablet sizes for your dose.
- **Do not** crush, break or chew the tablets.
- Take this medicine with food or within 30 minutes after you have eaten. Swallow the tablets with a full glass of water.
- Take this medicine 2 times each day, 10 to 12 hours apart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your morning dose of Capecitabine is:</th>
<th>Your evening dose of Capecitabine is:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>_______ 500 mg tablets and _______ 150 mg tablets</td>
<td>_______ 500 mg tablets and _______ 150 mg tablets</td>
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- **Do not** take antacids (Mylanta or Maalox) within 2 hours of taking Capecitabine.
- If you miss a dose, wait until it is time for your next dose, and skip your missed dose. **Do not** double up on doses.
- Use a calendar or diary to keep track of the days and times you take Capecitabine.
- **Do not** take more tablets than ordered by your doctor for each treatment cycle. This may mean that you have pills left over.
- Your doctor may change your dose in the future to find out what works best for you. Taking a lower dose of Capecitabine does not mean the medicine will not work.

How do I take Lapatinib?

There is a check (√) in the box by your dose of Lapatinib:

- □ 1250 mg (5 tablets)
- □ 1000 mg (4 tablets)
- □ 750 mg (3 tablets)

- **Do not** crush, break, or chew the tablets.
- **Do not eat grapefruit or drink grapefruit juice, Seville oranges or star fruit.** This can increase your risk of side effects.
• **Do not** take this medicine with food. Take this medicine 1 hour before or 2 hours after you eat.

• Take your medicine at the same time every day with a full glass of water. If for some reason you are unable to take a dose as scheduled, you can take it 4 hours before or 4 hours after, the time you normally take the medicine.

• If you miss a dose completely, wait until it is time for your next dose, and skip the missed dose. **Do not** double up on doses.

• Use a calendar or diary to keep track of the days and times you take Lapatinib.

• **Do not** take more tablets than ordered by your doctor for each treatment cycle. This may mean that you have pills left over.

• Your doctor may change your dose in the future to find out what works best for you. Taking a lower dose of Lapatinib does not mean the medicine will not work.

**What are the side effects of this treatment?**

Every person responds differently to treatment. Some of the more common side effects of this treatment are:

• Diarrhea

• Rash or other skin changes, including “hand and foot syndrome”. Hand and foot syndrome may cause tingling, numbness or pain on the palms of your hands and soles of your feet. Your hands and feet may become swollen or red and have small sores or blisters. Your skin may become very dry and begin to crack and peel.

• Mouth pain or open sores on your tongue or in your mouth

• Fatigue

• Weakness

• Nausea or vomiting

• Stomach pain, bloating or feeling “full”

• Decreased appetite or taste changes

• Hair thinning

• Eye irritation

• Rash
- Changes in your nails (color changes or swelling around your nails)
- Changes in your skin color
- Low white blood cell count (may increase your risk for infection)
- Low hemoglobin (may cause you to have less energy and tire more easily)
- Low platelet count (may cause you to bleed more easily or longer than normal and have more bruising)

What should I do if I have a rash?
- Tell your doctor if the rash makes it hard for you to do your daily activities.
- The rash may look like acne, but it is not the same. **Do not use over-the-counter acne medicines or drying agents on your rash.** They can make your rash worse. Let your doctor know if you are taking any prescription medicines for acne.
- See the patient education handout [Rash from Epidermal Growth Factors (EGF) Receptor Blockers](#).

When should I call my doctor?
You should call your doctor right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms:
- Fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or higher

**A fever can be life threatening if not treated. Your doctor may ask you to go to the hospital.**

- Chills, sore throat, cough or a wound that does not get better
- Pain, redness, blisters or cracking on your hands and feet that keeps you from doing simple tasks, such as walking or buttoning your shirt
- Open sores on your lips, tongue or in your mouth
- Nausea that prevents you from eating or drinking
- Bleeding or bruising, including bloody or black stools or blood in your urine
- Diarrhea (4 or more loose stools in 24 hours) or diarrhea at night

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• Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
• Yellowing of your skin or eyes
• Chest pain, fast or irregular heartbeat

Is there anything else I should know about this treatment?
• Cancer treatments may make it harder for your body to fight infections. Wash your hands often and stay away from people who are sick.
• This treatment requires special precautions to prevent the Capecitabine from coming into contact (through blood, urine, bowel movements, vomit and vaginal or seminal fluids) with others. Your nurse or pharmacist will give you guidelines to follow when you take Capecitabine and for 48 hours after your last dose.
• Cancer treatments can change how your body reacts to vaccines. Talk to your doctor before getting any vaccines.
• It is important to keep hydrated during treatment. Unless told otherwise by your doctor, drink 8 to 10 cups of non-caffeinated fluid each day.
• Do not take this medicine if you have severe kidney disease, or a condition called dihydropyrimidine dehydrogenase (DPD) deficiency.
• Ask your doctor before you take aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), or naproxen (Aleve).

For more information about cancer, cancer treatments, side effects or how to take care of yourself during treatment, ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

You may also find it helpful to watch The James Patient Education videos at http://cancer.osu.edu/patientedvideos to help you learn tips for managing treatment side effects.