York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

# Dissolving Capecitabine Tablets

Information for patients, relatives and carers


ⓘ For more information, please contact:

**Cancer Pharmacy**

01904 721298

Magnolia Cancer Centre

York Hospital, Wigginton Road

York, YO31 8HE

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## Why have I been given this leaflet?

Your oncology team has prescribed a chemotherapy called capecitabine.

Capecitabine tablets are normally swallowed whole with a glass of water within 30 minutes of finishing a meal. This is because capecitabine works best when taken with food.

As you have difficulty swallowing tablets, this leaflet explains how to **safely dissolve capecitabine tablets in water** so that you can take your medicine correctly and safely.

This is not a licensed way of taking capecitabine. A licence states the conditions the medicine has been approved to treat. The manufacturer's leaflet will state that the tablets need to be swallowed whole. Do not be alarmed: we have evidence that shows capecitabine can be dissolved. Please follow the instructions in this leaflet.

## Important

- **Capecitabine tablets must never be crushed or broken.**
- Crushing tablets can create dust which may be harmful if inhaled or touched.
- Always follow the instructions in this leaflet carefully.

## When to take capecitabine

- Capecitabine should be taken **twice daily**, approximately **12 hours apart**.
- Each dose must be taken within 30 minutes of finishing a meal.

## Protection

The person preparing the solution should wear:

- Non-sterile gloves
- Non-sterile plastic apron

These items will be provided by the hospital and help protect against contact with the medicine.

A spillage kit will be provided in case any capecitabine is spilled while preparing the solution. Please return any contaminated waste to the Oncology Department for safe disposal.

## How to dissolve the tablets

- Fill a cup with **approximately 200 mL of warm (not hot) water.** The warm water should be made using boiled water mixed with cold water.
- Use a cup and spoon that are either:
    - Kept only for preparing capecitabine.
    - Disposable.

- Remove **the exact number of tablets prescribed** from the blister pack.
- Put the tablets into the water.
- Stir gently and allow the tablets to dissolve.
    - This may take up to **15 minutes.**
- Once the tablets have fully dissolved, you may add a non-citrus squash to help disguise the bitter taste.

  **Do not use fruit juice**.
- Drink the entire contents of the cup **immediately.**
- Rinse the cup with a small amount of water and drink this as well. This ensures you receive the full dose.

## Safety precautions

- After use, wash the cup and spoon thoroughly by hand only. **Do not clean in a dishwasher.**
- Wash them separately. Do not wash them with other dishes.
- Keep them separate from other household crockery and cutlery.
- If you spill any capecitabine while dissolving it, please use the spillage kit provided by the hospital and return the waste to the Oncology Department for safe disposal.

## Safe disposal

- Gloves and aprons are **single use** and must be discarded in the yellow bag provided by the hospital.
- The yellow bag must be **returned to the Oncology Department after each treatment cycle**.
- If you used a disposable cup and spoon, these are single use and should also be discarded in the yellow bag provided.
- If you use a re-usable cup and spoon, take the ones you used to the oncology department at the end of your treatment so they can be disposed of safely. Do not use them again for anything else.

## If capecitabine is given via a feeding tube

- Flavourings are not required.
- Pre-flush the feeding tube with **30–50 mL of water** using a 50 mL oral syringe.
- Dissolve the tablets as per the instructions on page 4.
- Draw up the capecitabine solution into an oral syringe and administer via the feeding tube.
- Rinse the container used to prepare the solution with **30–50 mL of water**, draw this up and administer to ensure the full dose is given.

- Flush the feeding tube again with **30–50 mL of water**.
- Whenever possible, capecitabine should be taken **within 30 minutes of feed being stopped**.
- If tube feeding is given overnight:
    - The morning dose should be taken within 30 minutes of the feed stopping.
    - The evening dose should be taken immediately before starting the feed.

## If you have any questions

If you are unsure about any part of these instructions or need further advice, please contact Cancer Pharmacy. The contact details are on the front page of this leaflet. Cancer Pharmacy is available 8.45am to 5.15pm, Monday to Friday.

For urgent enquiries outside these hours, please contact Ward 31. The contact details are on your SACT (systemic anti-cancer therapy) alert card.

## Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact Cancer Pharmacy.

## Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net.

An answer phone is available out of hours.

## Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website: www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/


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