



[Home](#)

2. Capecitabine

Capecitabine

Generic name: capecitabine [*KAP-e-SYE-ta-been*]

Brand name: [Xeloda](#)

Dosage form: oral tablet (150 mg; 500 mg)

Drug class: [Antimetabolites](#)



[Medically reviewed](#) by Drugs.com on May 27, 2024. Written by [Cerner Multum](#).

[Uses](#) [Side effects](#) [Warnings](#) [Before taking](#) [Dosage](#) [Interactions](#) [FAQ](#)

What is capecitabine?

Capecitabine is used alone or in combination chemotherapy to treat colon [cancer](#), [breast cancer](#), or [colorectal cancer](#).

Capecitabine is sometimes used when cancer has spread to other parts of the body (metastatic).

Capecitabine may also be used for purposes not listed in this medication guide.

Capecitabine side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction** (hives, difficult breathing, swelling in your face or throat) or **a severe skin reaction** ([fever](#), [sore throat](#), burning eyes, skin pain, red or purple skin [rash](#) with blistering and peeling).

Diarrhea may occur and could be severe. Stop taking capecitabine and tell your doctor right away if the number of bowel movements you usually have per day increases by 4 or more, or if you have bowel movements at night.

Capecitabine may cause serious side effects. Stop using capecitabine and call your doctor at once if you have:

- severe [diarrhea](#);
- bloody diarrhea with severe stomach pain and fever;
- severe [nausea](#) or loss of appetite that causes you to eat much less than usual;
- [vomiting](#) (more than once in 24 hours);
- fever above 100.5 degrees;
- sores or ulcers in your mouth, redness or swelling of your mouth or tongue, trouble eating or swallowing;
- [jaundice](#) (yellowing of the skin or eyes);
- **dehydration symptoms**--feeling very thirsty or hot, being unable to urinate, heavy [sweating](#), or hot and dry skin;

- **"hand and foot syndrome"**--pain, tenderness, redness, swelling, blistering, or peeling skin on your hands or feet;
- **heart problems**--chest pain, irregular heartbeats, swelling in your lower legs, rapid weight gain, feeling lightheaded or short of breath; or
- **low blood cell counts**--fever, chills, tiredness, mouth sores, skin sores, easy bruising, unusual bleeding, pale skin, cold hands and feet, feeling light-headed or short of breath.

Your cancer treatments may be delayed or permanently discontinued if you have certain side effects.

Common side effects of capecitabine may include:

- nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain;
- feeling weak or tired;
- hand and foot syndrome; or
- jaundice.

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

 [Capecitabine side effects](#) (more detail)

Related/similar drugs

Trodelvy

Trodelvy is a targeted anticancer medication used to treat types of breast cancer and bladder ...

Reviews & ratings

[4 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

Opdivo

Opdivo is used to treat many cancers, such as melanoma, non-small cell lung cancer, malignant ...

Reviews & ratings

5.8 / 10

[93 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

FEATURED

Verzenio

Verzenio is used to treat certain HR-positive and HFR2-negative breast

positive and HER2-negative breast cancers in adults. It is an ...

Reviews & ratings

8.0 / 10

[30 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

Opdivo Qvantig

Opdivo Qvantig is used to treat adults with melanoma, non-small cell lung cancer, renal cell ...

Reviews & ratings

[Add a review](#)

[View more](#)

Keytruda

Keytruda is used to treat multiple types of cancer such as melanoma, non-small cell lung cancer ...

Reviews & ratings

4.9 / 10

[252 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

Arimidex

Arimidex is used to treat breast cancer in postmenopausal women. Learn about side effects ...

Reviews & ratings

5.8 / 10

[80 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

Pembrolizumab

Pembrolizumab (Keytruda) is a monoclonal antibody cancer medicine used to treat

Reviews & ratings

5.2 / 10

[View more](#)

Tamoxifen

Tamoxifen blocks the actions of estrogen and is used to treat and prevent some types of breast ...

Reviews & ratings

5.6 / 10

[96 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

Warnings

Taking a blood thinner (warfarin, Coumadin, Jantoven) can increase your risk of severe bleeding during and shortly after treatment with capecitabine. This risk is higher in adults older than 60.

Before taking this medicine

You should not take capecitabine if you are allergic to capecitabine or [fluorouracil](#), or if you have:

- severe kidney disease.

Tell your doctor if you have ever had:

- a metabolic disorder called DPD (dihydropyrimidine dehydrogenase) deficiency;
- liver or kidney disease;
- heart problems; or
- if you use a blood thinner and you have routine "INR" or prothrombin time tests.

Capecitabine can harm an unborn baby **if the mother or the father is using this medicine.**

- **If you are a woman**, you may need a pregnancy test to make sure you are not pregnant. Use [birth control](#) while using this medicine and for at least 6 months after your last dose.
- **If you are a man**, use birth control if your sex partner is able to get pregnant. Keep using birth control for at least 3 months after your last dose.
- Tell your doctor right away if a pregnancy occurs.

Pregnancy may be less likely to occur while the mother or the father is using this medicine. **Both men and women should still use birth control to prevent pregnancy because the medicine can harm an unborn baby.**

Do not breastfeed while using this medicine, and for at least 2 weeks after your last dose.

How should I take capecitabine?

Follow all directions on your prescription label and read all medication guides or instruction sheets. Use the medicine exactly as directed.

Capecitabine is usually taken twice per day, and may be only part of a treatment program that may also include other medications taken on different schedules. **Follow your doctor's dosing instructions very carefully.**

Take with food or within 30 minutes after eating a meal.

Swallow the tablet whole with water and do not crush, chew, or break it. Tell your doctor if you have trouble swallowing the tablet.

Capecitabine is given in a 3-week treatment cycle, and you may only need to take the medicine only on certain days of this cycle.

You may get dehydrated during prolonged illness. Call your doctor if you are sick with vomiting or diarrhea.

You may need frequent medical tests and your cancer treatments may be delayed based on the results. **Capecitabine can have long lasting effects on your body.** You may also need medical tests for a short time after your last dose.

Store at room temperature away from moisture and heat. Keep the bottle tightly closed when not in use.

 [Detailed Capecitabine dosage information](#)

What happens if I miss a dose?

Take the medicine as soon as you can, but skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next dose. **Do not** take two doses at one time.

What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222.

What should I avoid while taking capecitabine?

Follow your doctor's instructions about any restrictions on food, beverages, or activity.

What other drugs will affect capecitabine?

Taking a blood thinner (warfarin, Coumadin, Jantoven) can increase your risk of severe bleeding during and shortly after treatment with capecitabine. This risk is higher in adults older than 60.

Tell your doctor if you also take [allopurinol](#).

Other drugs may affect capecitabine, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, [vitamins](#), and [herbal products](#). Tell your doctor about all other medicines you use.

 [Capecitabine drug interactions](#) (more detail)

Does capecitabine interact with my other drugs?

Enter medications to view a detailed interaction report using our [Drug Interaction Checker](#).

capecitabine

+

Enter a drug name

Add

Frequently asked questions

- [Why do you need to take Xeloda with food?](#)

More about capecitabine

- [Check interactions](#)
- [Compare alternatives](#)
- [Pricing & coupons](#)
- [Reviews \(61\)](#)
- [Drug images](#)
- [Latest FDA alerts \(1\)](#)
- [Side effects](#)
- [Dosage information](#)
- [During pregnancy](#)
- [Drug class: antimetabolites](#)
- [Breastfeeding](#)
- [En español](#)

Patient resources

- [Capecitabine advanced reading](#)

Other brands

[Xeloda](#)

Professional resources

- [Capecitabine monograph](#)
- [Capecitabine \(FDA\)](#)

Other brands

Related treatment guides

- [Colorectal Cancer](#)
- [Breast Cancer, Metastatic](#)
- [Pancreatic Cancer](#)
- [Stomach Cancer](#)

Further information

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use this medication only for the indication prescribed.

Always consult your healthcare provider to ensure the information displayed on this page applies to your personal circumstances.

Medical Disclaimer

Copyright 1996-2025 Cerner Multum, Inc. Version: 8.02.

DRUG STATUS

Availability		
Rx	Prescription only	
Pregnancy & Lactation		
	Risk data available	
CSA Schedule*		
N/A	Not a controlled drug	▼
Approval History		
	Drug history at FDA	▼

User Reviews & Ratings

6.7 / 10

[61 Reviews](#)

Related News

Alert: [Safety Announcement: FDA Highlights Importance of DPD Deficiency Discussions with Patients Prior to Capecitabine or 5FU Treatment](#)

Images

[Capecitabine 500 mg \(500\)](#)



[View larger images](#)

Drugs.com Mobile App

Access drug & treatment information, identify pills, check interactions and set up personal medication records.



About

[About Drugs.com](#)

[Advertising policy](#)

[Attribution & citations](#)

Terms & privacy

[Terms of use](#)

[Editorial policy](#)

[Privacy policy](#)

Support

[Help center](#)

[Sitemap](#)

[Contact us](#)



[Subscribe to our newsletter](#) for the latest medication news, new drug approvals and FDA alerts.

Drugs.com provides accurate and independent information on more than 24,000 prescription drugs, over-the-counter medicines and natural products. This material is provided for educational purposes only and is not intended for medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Data sources include Micromedex (updated 7 Apr 2025), Cerner Multum™ (updated 13 Apr 2025), ASHP (updated 10 Apr 2025) and others.



Ad Choices
ADVERTISEMENT



Copyright © 2000-2025 Drugs.com. All rights reserved.