



**BC Cancer Agency**

## **For the Patient: GIRCAP**

Other Names: Adjuvant therapy for stage II and III rectal cancer using Capecitabine, for patients previously treated with radiation therapy and surgery.

**GI** = GastroIntestinal  
**R** = Radiation Therapy  
**CAP** = **CAP**ecitabine

### **ABOUT THIS MEDICATION**

#### **What are these drugs used for?**

- Capecitabine is a drug given as therapy to treat rectal cancer. It is a tablet which is taken by mouth.

#### **How do these drugs work?**

- Capecitabine works by interfering with dividing cells and preventing an increase in the number of cancer cells.

### **INTENDED BENEFITS**

- You are being asked to take Capecitabine as a treatment to reduce the risk of recurrence of rectal cancer after radiation therapy and surgery.
- “Adjuvant” therapy means this treatment is being given in addition to other types of treatment, such as radiation and surgery.

### **TREATMENT SUMMARY**

#### **How are these drugs given?**

- Capecitabine is usually taken twice a day, about 12 hours apart, with equal numbers of tablets taken at each dose. You may be given tablets of more than one strength to make the right dose.
- Capecitabine should be taken within 30 minutes following the end of a meal (breakfast and dinner) with a glass of water.
- Capecitabine is usually given for two consecutive weeks (14 days), followed by a 7 day break. This 21 day period of time is called a “cycle”. The cycle is usually repeated up to a maximum of 8 treatments, but may be changed depending on how the chemotherapy affects you.

**The calendar on the following page outlines your overall treatment plan.**

C Y C L E	DATE	TREATMENT PLAN
		▶ Week 1 → Capecitabine orally in a.m. & p.m. x 7 days with food
	1	▶ Week 2 → Capecitabine orally in a.m. & p.m. x 7 days with food
		Week 3 → No Treatment

C Y C L E	DATE	TREATMENT PLAN
		▶ Week 1 → Capecitabine orally in a.m. & p.m. x 7 days with food
	2	▶ Week 2 → Capecitabine orally in a.m. & p.m. x 7 days with food
		Week 3 → No Treatment

C Y C L E	DATE	TREATMENT PLAN
		▶ Week 1 → Capecitabine orally in a.m. & p.m. x 7 days with food
	3	▶ Week 2 → Capecitabine orally in a.m. & p.m. x 7 days with food
		Week 3 → No Treatment

C Y C L E	DATE	TREATMENT PLAN
		▶ Week 1 → Capecitabine orally in a.m. & p.m. x 7 days with food
	4	▶ Week 2 → Capecitabine orally in a.m. & p.m. x 7 days with food
		Week 3 → No Treatment

C Y C L E	DATE	TREATMENT PLAN
		▶ Week 1 → Capecitabine orally in a.m. & p.m. x 7 days with food
	5	▶ Week 2 → Capecitabine orally in a.m. & p.m. x 7 days with food
		Week 3 → No Treatment

C Y C L E	DATE	TREATMENT PLAN
		▶ Week 1 → Capecitabine orally in a.m. & p.m. x 7 days with food
	6	▶ Week 2 → Capecitabine orally in a.m. & p.m. x 7 days with food
		Week 3 → No Treatment

C Y C L E	DATE	TREATMENT PLAN
	7	
		▶ Week 2 → Capecitabine orally in a.m. & p.m. x 7 days with food
		Week 3 → No Treatment

C Y C L E	DATE	TREATMENT PLAN
	8	
		▶ Week 2 → Capecitabine orally in a.m. & p.m. x 7 days with food
		Week 3 → No Treatment

### What will happen when I get my drugs?

- A blood test is done each cycle, on or before the first day of each treatment cycle. The dose and timing of your chemotherapy may be changed based on your blood counts and / or other side effects.
- Sometimes capecitabine treatment has to be stopped for a short time because of side effects. When you restart capecitabine treatment, do not make up for the missed dose(s); instead, take as directed by your cancer doctor and finish the treatment on the same day as originally planned. For example, if you stop on day 3 of your 14-day treatment course and then restart at a later day, you would still take the last dose on day 14. You may be told to take a different dose and you may have extra tablets left over. Return the extra tablets to the clinic at your next visit. Taking a lower dose does not affect the usefulness of capecitabine.

### Side Effects

- The doctor will review the risks of treatment and possible side effects with you before starting treatment.
- The pharmacist will review how to take the medication and possible side effects with you on the day you first pick up your medication.
- Unexpected and unlikely side effects can occur with any drug treatment. Please refer to the patient information handout titled "***For the Patient: capecitabine***" for a complete list of possible side effects and their management.

### Medication Interactions

- Some drugs such as warfarin (COUMADIN®), phenytoin (DILANTIN®) and fosphenytoin (CEREBYX®) may **interact** with capecitabine. Tell your doctor if you are taking these or any other drugs as you may need extra blood tests or your dose may need to be changed. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start taking any new drugs. Please refer to "***For the Patient: capecitabine***".

**If you experience symptoms or changes in your body that have not been described in “*For the Patient: capecitabine*” but worry you, or in any symptoms are severe, contact:**

\_\_\_\_\_ at telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_