



Fifth Edition  
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# **Clinical Pharmacy Guide: Cancer Drug Treatment Assessment and Review**

BC Cancer  
Division of Pharmacy  
Pharmacy Educators  
Communities Oncology Network

BRITISH COLUMBIA

[www.bccancer.bc.ca](http://www.bccancer.bc.ca)

Introduction  
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\*Name Changed from Clinical Pharmacy Guide: Chemotherapy Assessment and Review

\*\*OUT OF PRINT:

This manual was originally published in 2003 in a bound format, which is now out of print. Please use this online version.

Pharmacy Guide to BC Cancer Chemotherapy  
Protocols – The Clinical Interpretation and Application of Treatment Protocol Summaries

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## Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to provide recommendations to pharmacists in British Columbia for the clinical assessment and review of cancer drug treatment orders received within their practices. Cancer drug treatment involves drugs which inhibit or prevent the proliferation of cancers, including chemotherapy, hormonal therapy, immunotherapy, and targeted therapy. All of the BC Cancer drug treatment protocols are found on the BC Cancer website under the Chemotherapy Protocols section. This applies to both oral and parenteral dosage forms. Oral cancer drug therapy can be as toxic as parenteral cancer drug therapy and therefore requires the same assessment and review process. It is hoped that pharmacists will use this guide to gain a better understanding of BC Cancer drug treatment protocols and recommendations, thereby enhancing the quality of pharmaceutical care provided to their patients. Hospitals may need to adapt these guidelines based on the requirements of their patients and institutional policies.

These guidelines are based on the following BC Cancer Policies [Systemic Therapy – Policies and Procedures]:

1. III-10 Systemic Therapy Delivery Process  
This policy outlines the responsibilities of physicians, pharmacists, and nurses for the safe prescribing, preparation, dispensing and administration of cancer drugs.
2. III-40 Systemic Therapy Treatments  
This policy explains the rationale for the treatment protocols and defines terms used by the Provincial Systemic Therapy Program.
3. III-45 Compassionate Access Program
4. Regional policies and procedures used by the BC Cancer pharmacies.



## Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this guide, the pharmacist should be able to:

- Interpret BC Cancer treatment protocols
- Determine the eligibility of a drug for reimbursement by BC Cancer
- Assess cancer drug treatment orders for suitability
- Interpret laboratory results and adjust doses accordingly
- Select appropriate drug delivery methods for cancer drugs
- Identify the toxicities of cancer drugs and discuss options to minimize toxicity
- Review a patient's medication profile for possible interactions with cancer drugs
- Define the term "benefit status" and identify benefit and non-benefit supportive care medications

The guide begins by providing a didactic section with pertinent information used by the pharmacist to clinically assess cancer drug treatment orders. The pharmacist may further enhance his/her knowledge by working through case studies. Hyperlinks are embedded throughout the guide, right-click on them to open them in a new tab or page and maintain your place in the guide.

Note: for drugs with similar names, BC Cancer protocols and pre-printed orders incorporate the risk reduction strategy of TALLman lettering by printing sections of the drug name in capital letters to emphasize differences between the Look-Alike/Sound-Alike drugs. For example, carboplatin is written as CARBOplatin to avoid mix-ups with CISplatin. See BC Cancer Pharmacy Directive VI-90-01: Use of TALLman Lettering for Medication Nomenclature [[Safe Handling Manual – Module 2 – Directives](#)] for more information.