

ORAL CHEMOTHERAPY EDUCATION



PASSION FOR PATIENTS
NCODA.ORG



ALOPECIA/HAIR LOSS

Hair loss, or alopecia, is often thought of with chemotherapy, but not all anti-cancer drugs cause this side effect. Hair loss can refer to hair thinning that is not noticeable to others, to complete hair loss. Alopecia can be the loss of hair anywhere on the body, including the head, the eyebrows, arm or facial hair. If an oral anti-cancer drug has a side effect of alopecia, it will usually cause mild hair thinning and not complete hair loss.

To minimize hair loss, brush your hair gently, and avoid permanents (“perms”) or dyes in your hair. Your healthcare team or cancer support group can help you find wigs if you’d like to use one, and scarves can be a good option. Biotin is a supplement commonly used to support hair health. If you are interested in alternative supplements, ask your healthcare team to be sure the supplement does not interact with your treatment.

Lost hair will usually grow back after cancer treatment has stopped, but it may look different when it grows back. It might be a different color, be curly rather than straight or have a new look or feel.

Examples of Medications That May Cause Alopecia (not intended to be an exhaustive list)

Minimal risk (< 1%)	ibrutinib, venetoclax, olaparib, enzalutamide, abiraterone, alectinib
Mild risk (< 10%)	imatinib, capecitabine, dasatinib, sunitinib, anastrozole, osimertinib, everolimus, tamoxifen
Moderate risk (10%–35%)	nilotinib, cabozantinib, palbociclib, letrozole, exemestane, lenvatinib
High risk (> 50%)	temozolomide, vismodegib

Resource: <https://hopescarves.org>

Additional instructions

Important notice: The Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC), Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association (HOPA), National Community Oncology Dispensing Association, Inc. (NCODA), and Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) have collaborated in gathering information for and developing this patient educational supplement. This summarized information represents a brief summary of supportive care information and other resources. This supplement does not cover all existing information related to the possible directions, doses, precautions, interactions, adverse effects, or risks associated with specific medication or adverse events and should not substitute for the advice of a qualified healthcare professional. Provision of this supplement is for informational purposes only and does not constitute or imply endorsement, recommendation, or favoring of this side effect management by ACCC, HOPA, NCODA, or ONS, who assume no liability for and cannot ensure the accuracy of the information presented. The collaborators are not making any representations with respect to the clinical information presented whatsoever, and any and all decisions, with respect to such patient management, are at the sole risk of the individual consuming the medication. All decisions related to education and managing adverse events should be made with the guidance and under the direction of a qualified healthcare professional.

Permission: Supplemental Oral Chemotherapy Education (OCE) sheets are provided as a free educational resource for patients with cancer in need of concise, easy-to-understand information about cancer topics and adverse event management. Healthcare providers are permitted to copy and distribute the sheets to patients as well as direct patients to the OCE website for information. However, commercial reproduction or reuse, as well as rebranding or reposting of any type, are strictly prohibited without permission of the copyright holder. Please email permission requests and licensing inquiries to Contact@NCODA.org.

Copyright © 2022. All rights reserved.