



**braintumour**  
foundation  
OF CANADA

For additional Information Sheets or to learn more about other brain tumour topics, visit [www.BrainTumour.ca](http://www.BrainTumour.ca)

Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada Information Sheets are provided as an informational and educational tool and are not intended to replace the advice or instruction of a professional healthcare practitioner, or to substitute for medical care. We urge you to seek specific medical advice on individual matters of concern.

Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada is generously supported by individuals, corporations and employee groups. It is through the tireless dedication of donors that help is available for anyone affected by a brain tumour, including patients, survivors and their loved ones.

# Ask the Expert Information Sheet

## What Your Pharmacy Can Do For You

By: Kelly Smith, Oncology Pharmacist

### Pharmacy (Merriam-Webster)<sup>1</sup>

Noun | phar . ma . cy | \ 'fār-mə-sē\

1. The art, practice or profession of preparing, preserving, compounding, and dispensing medical drugs.
2. a: A place where medicines are compounded or dispensed  
b: Drugstore

Pharmacies within hospitals differ considerably from community pharmacies. Some hospital pharmacists may have more complex clinical medication management issues, whereas pharmacists in community pharmacies often have more complex business and customer relations issues.

Cancer centres also have pharmacists that may be available to patients for education and consultation. Depending on the centre, patients may have their prescriptions filled at the cancer centre, in the hospital out-patient pharmacy or in their community pharmacy.

It is best to get your medication filled at a pharmacy that is familiar with specialized brain tumour treatments.

Dealing with one pharmacy is recommended, so that your pharmacist can keep records of your complete medication history and deal with any problems that arise both with prescription medications and any over-the-counter drugs that you may purchase. However, some of your medications may not be readily available at community pharmacies so check with your health care team where it is best to get your prescriptions filled.

### What you need to know about your medicines <sup>2</sup>

1. What is the name of your medicine and what is it used to treat
2. When and how often you should take the medicine
3. How long you should be taking your medicine
4. What you should do if you forget to take the medicine
5. When and if you should notice the medicine taking effect (i.e. outcome)
6. What, if any, special instructions there are for taking the medicine (such as food, drink or medicine container instructions)
7. What side effects can occur in taking the medicine and how you can recognize the warning signs of certain adverse symptoms or dangerous side

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you are **not** alone

## Additional support, information and education offered by Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada:

Adult, Pediatric and Non-Malignant Brain Tumour Handbooks available in English and French.

“A Friend in Hope” children’s storybook available in English and French.

20+ Adult Support Groups across Canada (in-person and virtual)

Toll-free information and support line

Closed Facebook Support Group

BrainWAVE Pediatric Support Program

Print BrainStorm Newsletter

Email Newsletters:

- E-BrainStorm
- Peace of Mind

All patient resources are available free-of-charge in Canada. Call 1-800-265-5106 or visit [www.BrainTumour.ca](http://www.BrainTumour.ca) for additional details and information.

effects

8. What to do if you experience any problems in taking the medicine

9. How to store the medicine

Also, if not given, ask your pharmacist for detailed written information.

## Oral Chemotherapy for Brain Tumours

Common oral medicines used to treat brain tumours:

- Temozolomide
- Etoposide
- Lomustine
- Procarbazine

While all medicines should be kept out of reach of children and pets, this is especially true for oral chemotherapy, due to the potential for severe toxicity. Also, there are unique handling and disposal recommendations for oral chemotherapy.

Common supportive care medicines:

- Dexamethasone
- Ondansetron/Granisetron
- Prochlorperazine
- Metoclopramide
- Anti-seizure medicines

## References

1. Merriam-Webster Dictionary, accessed June 16, 2017, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pharmacy>
2. Ontario College of Pharmacists, accessed June 16, 2017, <http://www.ocpinfo.com/protecting-the-public/your-pharmacy/managing-care/>

## Author:

**Kelly Smith** is an Oncology Pharmacist at the London Regional Cancer Program (LRCP) Pharmacy at London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC). Kelly will be speaking at the second Join the Movement to End Brain Tumours National Conference in Toronto, on Saturday, October 21, 2017. The title of her presentation is “What Your Pharmacist Can Do For You” and will review the role of the pharmacist in the care of brain tumour patients, standards of practice and safe use of chemotherapy in the home. In this presentation, you will learn the importance of developing a relationship with your pharmacist.

Learn more about the **Join the Movement to End Brain Tumours National Conference** at [www.BrainTumour.ca/BrainTumourConference](http://www.BrainTumour.ca/BrainTumourConference)



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