



TEXAS ONCOLOGY PHARMACY

Patient Welcome Packet

TEXAS  ONCOLOGY

More breakthroughs. More victories.®



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Dear Patient,

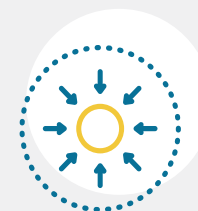
Welcome to Texas Oncology Pharmacy, an integral part of your oncology care team. Texas Oncology's founders believed there was a better way to treat patients with cancer. Its mission, vision, and core values reflect the practice's commitment to providing high-quality, evidence-based patient-centered care to cancer patients. We're privileged to be part of your care team and manage your pharmacy needs.

The pharmacy team understands that your medical needs are complex and require specialized knowledge as well as active and continual collaboration with your care team. We will provide you with the personalized service necessary to ensure that you achieve maximum benefit from your therapy. You can expect:



| *Personalized Patient Care*

Our specially trained pharmacy team will review your treatment plan with you and address any questions and concerns you have. Our oncology patients receive care from a medically integrated pharmacy services team that ensures coordinated, timely, and continuous support, including education and counseling, throughout their oncology journey. In addition, we provide counseling and detailed instructions on how to take your medications correctly and how to manage side effects.



| *Cancer-Specific Advice and Consultation*

Our pharmacists have deep knowledge of cancer medications and how they may interact with other drugs and other forms of treatment, whether chemotherapy infusion, radiation, or immunotherapies. With your oncology care team nearby, questions are easily addressed, and patients receive specific instructions on how and when to take their medications.



| *Pharmacy Patient Management Program*

We monitor all our patients' medications and progress through our medically integrated pharmacy patient management program. This program helps facilitate patient compliance to prescribed drug therapies, manage side effects, and promote overall health improvement. The success of the program depends upon patient engagement and cooperation. Without your active participation and full use of the program, the benefits will be limited. If you wish to opt out of this program, please call and speak to our pharmacy team, and we will make the requested adjustments to your care plan.



| *Coordination with Your Doctor*

The pharmacy team works exclusively with Texas Oncology providers and patients. As a medically integrated pharmacy, we are different from traditional retail and mail order pharmacies because we coordinate many aspects of patient care and disease management. The pharmacy provides convenient dispensing and delivery of specialty medications to our patients. Under the supervision of a qualified pharmacist and trained staff, we assist our patients to achieve optimal clinical outcomes while effectively managing the cost of therapies. We are part of your oncology care team, working directly with your doctors and caregivers to address any needs you may have with your treatment immediately. We will always keep the lines of communication open between you and your doctors and caregivers. We are here to make sure that any difficulties you may be having with your treatment are addressed immediately.



| **Clinical Lab Value Monitoring**

Due to the complex nature of many drug therapies and the need to make sure that the therapy is as effective as possible, we may need to coordinate regular reviews of your lab tests with your doctor. These may require a visit to your doctor to make sure that your therapy is progressing as expected. Please be aware that pharmacy uses this information for internal monitoring only. Your personal health information is protected as outlined in our Notice of Privacy Practices included in this packet.



| **Regular Follow-up**

Getting your medications and supplies quickly and efficiently is essential. We are with you every step of the way during your treatment to provide support and advocacy.



| **Benefits**

Oncology care can be costly. We'll help you navigate the healthcare system to explore options available to you. In addition, our relationships with insurers will help provide you with information and explanations of your prescription and medical insurance benefits. Finally, we help you with private insurance and Medicare paperwork, billing, and claims. We also work with patient assistance programs on your behalf to get funding if you need financial support. If no financial resources are available for you, we will make every effort to get you your drug free of charge from the manufacturer.



| **Timely Access to Your Oncology Treatments**

Because cancer is our primary focus, our pharmacies are routinely stocked with cancer drugs and related pain, supportive, and hard-to-find medicines that our oncologists commonly prescribe. Special-order medications typically are available with a one-day turnaround.



| **Drug Substitution Protocols**

We'll always use the most cost-efficient option for you. Occasionally, it may be necessary to substitute generic drugs for brand-name drugs. This could occur due to your insurance company preferring the generic be dispensed or to reduce your co-pay. If this is the case, we will contact you prior to dispensing the medication to inform you of the substitution. When available, our pharmacy will default to generic to save you money. We will use brand name medication at you or your physician's request.



| **Delivery**

We offer fast and convenient delivery to you. Many times, your prescriptions will be available at the time of your next medical appointment.



| **Refill Reminders**

We will not automatically refill any prescription without your permission. If a refill is needed, we will begin working on it five to seven days before your refill due date. A pharmacy team member will contact you to discuss your ability to remain adherent to therapy, answer any questions you may have, confirm and update your medical and insurance information, and set the delivery or pickup date and details. We also work with your physician to understand their next steps in your treatment before refilling your prescription to ensure optimal care at the lowest possible cost to you.



| **24/7 Support**

As a medically integrated pharmacy care provider, we are available to coordinate with your medical team 24 hours a day, seven days a week, including holidays and weekends. We're always here to answer any questions or address your concerns. Our certified, highly trained oncology pharmacists can answer your questions and provide support whenever you need it.



| **Therapy Support and Adherence Monitoring**

The most expensive medication is the one that is not taken. It is vital that you take your medications as instructed by your pharmacists and as detailed on the pharmacy label. Pharmacy staff members will help to explain your medications and their use with your specific disease state. We encourage all patients to become empowered decision-makers. We are happy to provide you with information about advocacy groups and recommendations of other helpful resources. Just give us a call.

We look forward to being a member of your care team. By using our pharmacy, your entire oncology care team is better positioned to treat and care for you during your oncology journey. Thank you for choosing Texas Oncology Pharmacy.

Sincerely,

Your Texas Oncology Pharmacy Team



About Texas Oncology

VISION, MISSION, AND CORE VALUES

Our Vision

To be the first choice for cancer care.

Our Mission

To provide excellent, evidence-based care for each patient we serve, while advancing cancer care for tomorrow.

The Core Values of Texas Oncology

The principles that guide our practice are patient centered, and encompass three spheres:

PATIENT CARE

- To provide compassionate, individualized care for our patients.
- To provide care that is comprehensive and coordinated close to our patients' home.
- To attract and nurture the best physicians.
- To recognize and support the central role of clinical research in advancing cancer care.

CULTURE

- That engenders a collegial physician partnership.
- That respects individuals and the collective wisdom of the group.
- That embraces openness and fairness.

BUSINESS – *Our practice values professional management that:*

- Promotes convenient access at rural and urban sites.
- Provides leadership in efficient care delivery and improves all aspects of cancer care.
- Provides a financial structure to expand services to our patients.
- Is competitive in all aspects of our business.

Our Pharmacy Services



The use of oral therapeutics in cancer treatment is rapidly growing. Your doctors at Texas Oncology currently manage and oversee your infused cancer drugs, but they can also do the same with any oral medications that are a part of your treatment plan. As part of your treatment team, our on-site specialty pharmacy provides oral chemotherapy, immunotherapy, and other targeted medications as ordered by your oncologist. All these drugs require specialized knowledge and oversight. Our highly trained pharmacists collaborate with your care team to provide the best options for you. Our on-site pharmacy provides many convenient services dedicated solely to you and your oncology treatment plan.

We provide you with the personal service necessary to ensure that you achieve the most benefit from your therapy including:

- Personalized patient care
- Cancer-specific consultation
- Comprehensive oncology formulary
- Patient management program
- Timely access to your oncology treatments
- Home delivery of your medications (as needed)
- Coordination of your prescriptions with your other oncology treatments and appointments
- Refill reminders
- Access via phone to clinically trained pharmacists 24/7/365
- Disease-specific educational and support materials
- Drug-specific educational and support materials
- Close consultation with your physician to manage side effects
- Access to clinical research
- Therapy support
- Adherence monitoring and support
- Access to information online www.texasoncology.com/pharmacy
- Advocacy with insurance companies
- Advocacy with financial assistance sources
- Cost-effective / best options for you

Ask your doctor about using Texas Oncology Pharmacy and how you can take advantage of this team-based, unfragmented, and comprehensive care approach to your treatment.



After Hours Support and Services

After Hours Services

For after-hour emergencies, such as running out of your medication or questions on missed doses or potential side effects, please contact your local Texas Oncology clinic’s after-hours number. You will be directed to an operator, and a physician or pharmacist will return your call within 30 minutes, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Please contact us at any time if:

- You have questions about taking your medication.
- You are having any adverse reactions or want to consult with a pharmacist.
- You need to order supplies or medication refills.
- You have questions about your current order or experience delays with your shipment.
- You are having problems with equipment, dressings, or experience a change in your condition.
- You are hospitalized, your condition worsens, or your therapy is interrupted for any reason.
- There is a change in your prescription or supply needs.
- You need information about disposing of medication.
- You need information about accessing medication in the event of an emergency.
- Your therapy ends.
- You start taking new medications, including over the counter or herbal supplements, etc.
- You have a billing question or need to provide new health plan information, including out-of-pocket costs, deductibles, copayments, or co-insurance options.
- You would like additional information on ways to access your medication, health services, payment options, and therapy coordination.
- You would like to learn about product selection and availability, including current medications that Texas Oncology Pharmacy does not have access to.
- You would like to understand where to refill your medication if Texas Oncology Pharmacy is limited by your benefit plan.
- Anything causes you concern for your safety.

Insurance Coverage and Billing



| **Medication Cost**

Before your care begins, a pharmacy staff member will work with your physician and your insurance company to confirm your coverage and assist with the prior authorization. The prior authorization process may take a few business days to complete. We will inform you about medication costs that are not covered by your insurance, such as deductibles, copays, co-insurances, or plan changes.

Texas Oncology Pharmacy will bill your health insurance company for the cost of your medication on the date your prescription is filled. If the claim is rejected, we will notify you so that we can work together to resolve the issue. If your provider denies coverage or if you disagree with the benefits coverage, you may have the right to file an appeal with your health plan. We will assist you in the appeal process and provide any documentation you may need.

If Texas Oncology Pharmacy is an out-of-network provider in your insurance plan, we will find the most cost-effective way for you to receive your medication. In some cases, we may transfer your prescription(s) to the insurance provider or their in-network pharmacy. We will call you if needed so there is no disruption in your medication delivery.

| **Prior Authorization Facilitation**

We know that payers have numerous requirements for prior authorizations, from documentation and supporting literature to specific publications or evidence of molecular mutation. Since we share a clinical expertise in oncology, we can provide payers with reasoning for a particular drug and, thanks to our strong history with these companies, we know exactly what they need to issue an approval. We'll share their specific preferences — such as tried-and-failed requirements — and help you submit the necessary information. We're proud to have a low percentage of denials and a high denial-overturn rate, but we'll also remain vigilant through the appeal process in the case of a denial.

| **Copayments**

In most cases, our pharmacy is required by insurance companies to collect copayments before shipping your medication. Copayments can be paid by credit card (Visa, Mastercard, American Express, or Discover), electronic checking account debit (over the phone), or by check or money order (through the U.S. mail).

| **Lowest Cost Alternative**

We will automatically seek less expensive generic substitutions for your prescribed medications if your doctor allows for it. Ask us anytime if a lower-cost generic drug is available.

| **Financial Assistance**

Good care shouldn't be out of reach due to price, and we know that treatment can be costly. We work closely with nonprofit foundations and drug manufacturers' programs to help you afford your medication. If you do not have prescription drug coverage or cannot afford your copay amount, we will always do the following on your behalf:

1. Find out which assistance programs you might be eligible for.
2. Contact you to explain each program's details, including coverage and copay costs.
3. Assist in completing a confidential pre-screen assessment (usually required by various programs).
4. Once eligibility is confirmed, we will finish enrolling you into the program(s).
5. Keep you and the rest of your Texas Oncology care team updated throughout the process.
6. Ensure medication is available and dispensed immediately to you.
7. Track your coverage under the program and work to maximize your coverage so that you are covered if possible, under the patient assistance program.

| *If you have any questions around patient assistance, please contact our team.*

Phone: 1-800-778-9577

Email: RXPA_PAS@usoncology.com

Key Information on Your Prescription

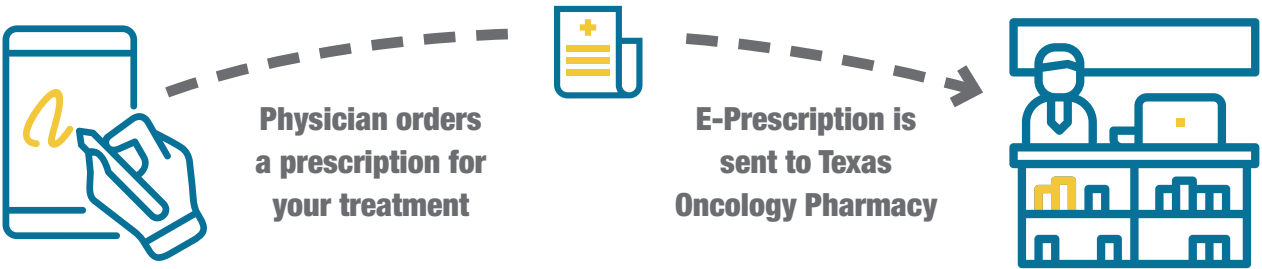


Texas Oncology Pharmacy patients should be advised that your physician has ownership in the pharmacy. You are not obligated to use the Texas Oncology Pharmacy. Just let us know, and we will transfer your prescription to your preferred pharmacy provider.

New Prescriptions

Your physician and the Texas Oncology Pharmacy work together to help you through your oncology care plan. When your physician determines that oral chemotherapy treatment is the best course of treatment, they will send your prescription via an electronic prescribing process to our pharmacy team unless otherwise requested by you or your pharmacy benefit manager.

Optimal value of the Texas Oncology care approach is best achieved by having a credible, accessible, and consistent care team. By utilizing the Texas Oncology Pharmacy, we can stay focused on providing you the care you deserve in a timely, comprehensive, and reliable way.



- 1 **Prior Authorization is Obtained**
- 2 **Pharmacy Determines Your Cost**
- 3 **Financial Assistance Team Identifies Options**
- 4 **Pharmacy and Medical Review is Completed**
- 5 **Prescription is Prepared and Available for You to Recieve**

Texas Oncology Pharmacy

- Focuses on you
- Works with your physician
- Specializes in oncology as sole focus
- Finds best options clinically and fiscally
- Advocates for you to your health plan and pharmacy benefit manager
- Gets your prescription fast and as requested by your physician and you

Refills

You can expect the pharmacy to contact you about your refill. We will call you about a week before you are due to run out of medication. If you have not received a call from the pharmacy within seven days of a refill need, you or an authorized representative may call your pharmacy directly. Please call 1-800-778-9577 or visit [texasoncology.com/services-and-treatments/pharmacy-services/find-my-pharmacy](https://www.texasoncology.com/services-and-treatments/pharmacy-services/find-my-pharmacy) for the list of our pharmacies and phone numbers.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I NEED A REFILL SOONER THAN SCHEDULED?

If you need a refill sooner than scheduled, please contact us. We will work with your insurance company to find a solution.

Auto Refill

To have a prescription automatically refilled, a pharmacy staff member will need to speak with you or an authorized representative and ask you a short series of questions for the pharmacist to review. During this call we will also check the day of the week you would prefer your refill to arrive. Your Texas Oncology pharmacy can deliver your order to your home, office, or designated destination.

Drug Substitution Protocols

We will always use the most cost-efficient option for you. Occasionally, it may be necessary to substitute generic drugs for brand-name drugs. This could occur due to your insurance company preferring the generic be dispensed or to reduce your copay. If this is the case, we will contact you prior to shipping the medication to inform you of the substitution. When available, our pharmacy will default to generic to save you money. We will use brand name medication at you or your prescriber's request.

Obtaining Drugs Not Available at Texas Oncology

There are very few drugs that Texas Oncology cannot obtain on your behalf. These drugs are usually restricted by the manufacturer to just one or two pharmacies in the nation. If you happen to need one of these limited distribution drugs, our pharmacy team will work with all parties to ensure you get the medication that is part of your oncology treatment plan.

Transfers

If at any time you prefer to utilize a different pharmacy, please just let our team know, and we will ensure there is a quick transfer of your prescription needs to your preferred provider. If we cannot provide your medication due to limited availability of the drug to our pharmacy, health and pharmacy plan restrictions, and medication order delays, we'll help you transfer your prescription to another pharmacy.



WHAT IF MY INSURANCE REQUIRES ME TO USE A DIFFERENT PHARMACY?

If you are required to use another pharmacy or we cannot fill your prescription, we will transfer the prescription to the pharmacy of choice or the pharmacy mandated by your insurance carrier.

If you are currently having your oral oncology medications filled at another pharmacy and would like for Texas Oncology to fill these for you, please contact the Texas Oncology pharmacy location nearest to you. Our pharmacy staff will check to make sure that we are able to fill these medications on your pharmacy benefits plan. If we can fill the prescription (at the same copay amount), we will call your current pharmacy to obtain the information that would enable us to fill all future prescriptions for you.

| **Prescription Status**

At any time, you may reach out to our pharmacy team and inquire about your prescription status by phone, email, or text. When your prescription is ready for pick up, we will email or call you directly with the information you have provided.

| **Prescription Pickup**

Many of our Texas Oncology Pharmacies are located at your doctor's office location, allowing for quick and easy pickup of your medications at the time of your medical visits. When you pick up your prescriptions at our office and transport them yourself, we will ensure you have the proper packaging to maintain the drug quality, including ice packs.

| **Prescription Delivery**

If you cannot pick up your prescription, we will deliver your oncology medication to your home or other preferred location allowed by law at no cost to you. Upon request, we can also include other supplies. We coordinate all refills to ensure that you or an adult caregiver is available to receive the shipment. A signature may or may not be required for the delivery, but is available for each shipment. Medication that requires refrigeration is sent in special packaging to maintain the appropriate temperature. Once you receive the package, store the medicine in the refrigerator. If the box looks damaged or is not in the correct temperature range, please call us. In the event of an order delay, we will contact you and assist you in obtaining the medication elsewhere if necessary.

Key Information on Your Prescription *Continued*

| **Quality of Your Prescription**

For us to service you appropriately, please inform your Texas Oncology Pharmacy team immediately if any of the following occur:

- 1. Prescription Change** – Should your physician add or delete any of the items on your prescription, or change the usage of any of the products, please contact us immediately.
- 2. Breakage** – please let us know if any items delivered are damaged.
- 3. Unable to Perform an Inventory Check** – If you are unable to take inventory of your supplies as scheduled, please call Texas Oncology Pharmacy ahead of time, and we will make arrangements to assist you.
- 4. Interruption of Therapy** – If your physician discontinues your treatment, or if you are hospitalized, please notify Texas Oncology Pharmacy so that your supplies and equipment can be picked up or your inventory adjusted accordingly.
- 5. Error in Shipment** – Call the dispensing Texas Oncology Pharmacy if you discover an error in the shipment so that we may correct the mistake.

| **Recalls**

Texas Oncology Pharmacy provides the highest level of pharmacy service and continually monitors drug safety alerts for drug recalls. A drug recall is when a product is removed from the market or a correction is made to the product because the drug is either defective or potentially harmful. The recall may be made by the manufacturers or distributors, by FDA request, or by FDA order. For any drug recall that affects patients, Texas Oncology Pharmacy follows FDA guidelines to remove the product from distribution and notify patients identified to be at risk.

Key Resource:

- 1. FDA Recalls:** <http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/DrugSafety/DrugRecalls/default.htm>

Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Plan



Texas Oncology Pharmacy has a comprehensive emergency preparedness plan in case a disaster occurs. Disasters may include fire to our facility or region, chemical spills in the community, hurricanes, snowstorms, tornadoes, and community evacuations. In case of severe weather or other disaster, our pharmacies work to ensure you receive your prescription on time. Our primary goal is to continue to service your prescription care needs. Every effort is made to coordinate care with local healthcare agencies, when needed. Texas Oncology Pharmacy’s procedures for ensuring continuity of care in the event of a disaster include:

1. The pharmacy will call you three to five days before an anticipated local weather disaster emergency utilizing the weather updates as point of reference. If you are not in the pharmacy local area but reside in a location that will experience a weather disaster, you are responsible for calling the pharmacy three to five days before the occurrence.
2. The pharmacy will send your medication via courier, FedEx, or UPS next day delivery during any suspected inclement weather emergencies.
3. In the event our pharmacy location is forced to close because of an emergency, your services will be coordinated with an alternate Texas Oncology Pharmacy branch or local pharmacy.
4. If a local disaster occurs and the pharmacy cannot reach you, or you cannot reach the pharmacy, please listen to your local news and rescue centers for advice on obtaining medication. Visit your local hospital immediately if you will miss a dose.

5. The pharmacy recommends all patients leave a secondary emergency number.
6. If you have an immediate need for medication, we will supply your needs on a priority basis. We will provide you with enough supply to get through the emergency, whenever possible.

If an emergency occurs and we are unable to reach you, and you are experiencing difficulties administering or obtaining your medication, please go to the nearest emergency room for help. If you have a personal emergency, which is not environmental, and you need your medication, please contact the pharmacy at your convenience, and we will aid you.

To make sure an emergency does not negatively impact your prescription needs, you should take the following precautionary measures:

- Whenever possible, keep a two- to three-day supply of your medication on hand and a back-up power supply for your medical equipment and/or supplies.
- Make sure we have accurate contact information, including your emergency contacts.
- In case of an emergency, seek medical attention at an area hospital or by calling 911.
- If traveling by air, be sure to keep a supply of your needed medications on your person in the event there is a delay in receiving checked luggage.

Remember that preparation is key when facing emergencies – please be safe.



Storage and Handling of Medication

During and after cancer treatment, people may have one or more medications to take at home. These powerful medications can be very harmful if someone other than the person with cancer takes them. Therefore, you and your caregivers need to know the safest ways to store and dispose of specific medications.

The following are general guidelines for the storage and handling of your medication from Texas Oncology Pharmacy. More specific information may be available at the time of dispense.

General Storage Tips

Consider storing your medications separately from those of your other family members. You could keep them on a different shelf or in a different cabinet or drawer.

- Store your prescriptions in a safe, cool, dry place.
- Your prescriptions should be out of the sight and reach of children and/or pets. Consider using child-proof features on lids, if possible.
- Keep all your medications in a place with good lighting so you can read the label and take the correct amount.
- Store your medications in the container it came in. This helps you know which one is which and keeps the information about how often to take it right at your fingertips. Always keep the lid tightly closed.
- Save and organize the information leaflets the pharmacy gives you with your prescriptions. These documents remind you when and how to take your medication, about any storage directions, and what potential side effects you may experience.



Storage and Handling of Medication

Continued

| Storing Pain Management Medication

People diagnosed with cancer often experience pain, either from the cancer itself or as a side effect of treatment. As a result, managing and treating pain is an important part of a person’s overall treatment plan. This may involve the use of pain-relief medications called analgesics. Some people with moderate to severe pain may use opioids, also known as narcotics.

Although these drugs effectively relieve cancer pain, opioids are dangerous if a family member or pet swallows them. And, people who abuse drugs may seek them out. Therefore, take additional steps to store your opioid pain medication safely and securely:

- Always store pain medication in a bottle with a child-resistant lid.
- Keep all your opioid medication in one location where a pet, child, teenager, or stranger cannot easily see it or access it.
- Consider storing your pain medication in a secure lockbox that only you and your caregivers can access. Some people have safes to secure cash, documents, or firearms, and those can be used, as well.
- If your doctor prescribes a fentanyl skin patch, make sure that you keep even used patches away from others. After using a patch, fold it in half to seal the sticky parts and safely dispose of it (see below). These patches can get stuck on the feet and skin of children and pets if not disposed of properly. Opioid medication

from the patches can be absorbed even after the patches have already been used.

- Only share details about your prescription(s) with your caregiver or others who need to know.

| Special Handling of Oral Chemotherapy

Many chemotherapy drugs are now taken by mouth as take-home prescriptions. Although this is more convenient, you must consider several important aspects:

- Store all chemotherapy drugs in its original container, in a safe place, and away from all other medications. Always keep medications out of the reach of children and/or pets.
- Most oral chemotherapy should be stored at room temperature, away from heat, moisture, and direct sunlight. This means you should not place chemotherapy on a windowsill, near a sink, or in a bathroom.
- Some types of chemotherapy require special storage or handling, such as refrigeration.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist how to store your medication. If you use a pill box or other type of medication organizer, keep one for chemotherapy and one for any other medication(s). Clearly label both boxes.
- Keep the local poison control center’s telephone number handy in case a pet, child, or other member of your household accidentally swallows the medication.
- The national number, which will route you to the local center based on your area code, is 800-222-1222.

| Handling Body Fluids and Waste

Many oral chemotherapy drugs remain in your body for several days after being taken, so some of the drug may be present in urine, stool, sweat, or vomit. Once you have started to take oral chemotherapy, it is important to follow the instructions below every day for as long as your treatment lasts. This will keep yourself, loved ones, and the environment as safe as possible.

- Pregnant women should avoid touching anything that may be soiled with body fluids from the patient.
- You may use the same toilet, septic tank, and/or sewer that you usually use. If you have a low-flow toilet, close the lid and flush twice to ensure all waste has been discarded.
- If the toilet or toilet seat becomes soiled with urine, stool, or vomit, clean the surfaces before other people use the toilet.
- Wash hands with soap and water after using the toilet. If you need a bedpan, be sure your caregiver knows to wear gloves to assist with cleanup and to wash the bedpan with soap and water every day.
- If you do not have good control of bladder or bowels, use a disposable pad with a plastic back, a diaper, or a sheet to absorb body waste.
- Wash any skin that has been exposed to body waste or any oral chemotherapy drug with soap and water.
- Linens or clothing that are soiled with body fluids or body waste should be washed separately from other linens and clothing. If you do not have a washer, place the soiled linens in a plastic bag until they can be washed.
- Wash hands with soap and water after touching linens or clothing that may be soiled with body fluids.

Disposal of Medication



What You Need to Know About Oral Chemotherapy

Medications are important for treating many conditions and diseases; however, they may be harmful if taken by someone that does not need them. To avoid accidental exposure or intentional misuse of prescription and over the counter drugs, it is important you dispose of them properly.

| General Medication Disposal

Expired or unwanted prescription or over the counter medications should never be flushed down the toilet or a drain. Doing so can cause contamination because Texas’s wastewater treatment systems are not designed to remove pharmaceuticals from water.

Household Disposal Steps*

If no disposal instructions are provided on the medication’s label and no drug take-back program is available in your area, follow the recommended steps below to safely dispose of your medication:

1. Keep in the original container.
2. Mark out your name and the prescription number.
3. **For tablets or capsules:**
add water or soda to dissolve them.
For liquids:
Add something inedible, such as dirt or cat litter.
4. Close the lid and secure with duct or packaging tape.
5. Place container in a non-see-through container, like a coffee can or soup can.
6. Tape that container closed.
7. Place container in the trash. Do not put in the recycle bin.

DON’T: Flush expired or unwanted medications down the toilet or drain unless the label specifically instructs you to do so.

DO: Return unwanted or expired medications to a drug take-back program or follow the steps for household disposal outlined in this packet.

**Source: Information provided by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.*

| Pain Medication Disposal

It is illegal for your healthcare team to personally accept returned opioid pain medication. Many law enforcement agencies, such as police and sheriff’s departments maintain drop boxes for disposal of unused pain medicines in their stations. The DEA maintains a website where you can search for the nearest public disposal location.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommends that some opioid medications be flushed down the toilet. But some communities have rules and restrictions against this. When in doubt, check with your local water treatment and/or sanitation department.

For more information or to locate eco-friendly and safe options for medication disposal in your local area, visit www.DisposeMyMeds.org.

Learning how to manage your oral chemotherapy might feel challenging - especially at first - but understanding what to expect can help you take charge of your health. We want to help you get the most from your treatment. The following discusses how staying on track with your medication therapy and lifestyle changes can help you live a full and active life.

| Staying on Track with Treatment

Oral chemotherapy drugs are used to slow the growth of cancer or kill cancer cells. Your doctor has prescribed your medication because it is the best choice for your treatment, but you must take your medication as prescribed – at the right times and the correct doses. Certain things might make it feel hard to stay on track with treatment, such as:

- A complex medication schedule that might involve taking 10, 20, or more tablets or capsules a day
- Combination therapy with multiple types of medications
- Side effects, like fatigue and nausea, which can affect everyday life and make it hard to get into a regular treatment routine

Even after the first few weeks of treatment, it might be hard to stay motivated. The benefits might seem like they’re too far in the future as you deal with side effects and inconvenience in the present. Some people decide on their own to cut back their dose. Others decide to take a “break” for weeks or even months at a time. But doing this can affect the success of treatment. If your treatment routine starts to feel too hard, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist for help managing your medications. Do not stop taking your medications without asking your doctor first. Staying on track with treatment is important to improving your health.

| Know What Your Medication Looks Like

Make sure you are taking the right amount of the proper medication. This is very important if you take different medications at different times of day. Many cancer drugs come in different strengths. Some people need to take two different strengths at the same time. Taking the wrong strength could result in taking too much of a medication (overdose) or too little (underdose). Different strengths of the same drug can differ in the following ways:

- Color
- Letters
- Shape
- Size, words, or numbers printed on the tablet or capsule

Look carefully at your medication as you are about to take it. Be mindful of what you are doing. This can help you be sure you are taking the right medication at the right time. This is especially important if your doctor changes your medication dose or schedule.

What You Need to Know About Oral Chemotherapy

Continued

| Know How to Take Your Medication

This should be the easy part, right? You just swallow the medication, usually with water. While that's true, it also matters when you take it and what else, if anything, you take along with it.

| When to Take Your Medication

Many oral chemotherapy drugs are taken at the same time every day. Others are taken on schedules that can change from week to week. Be sure you know your medication schedules. This lowers the risk of forgetting a dose. It also helps ensure the most benefit from the medication.

- Be aware that you might need to wait a certain number of hours between doses of certain medications.
- Try taking your medication at the same time as other routine tasks. For example, for medications you must take in the evening, plan to take them after brushing your teeth or as you get ready for bed. This might make you less likely to forget a dose.
- Set an alarm to remind yourself to take your medication, both at home and away from home.

| How to Swallow Your Medication

Many oral medications should not be broken, cut, or crushed. This can make some drugs ineffective or create inaccurate doses. Be especially careful if capsules are accidentally opened or damaged. The contents of some oral chemotherapy capsules should not touch your skin or mucous membranes, including nasal passages, because they can be very irritating. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if this precaution applies to your medication.

Most oral chemotherapy drugs should be swallowed whole with water unless your doctor has told you otherwise. If you find it hard to swallow tablets or capsules, the following tips might help:

- Place the tablet or capsule on the tip of your tongue. Drink some water. Tilt your head back and swallow.
- If that doesn't work, place it on the back of your tongue. Drink some water. Tilt your chin down toward your chest and swallow.
- Take a deep breath before placing the medication in your mouth. This can help stop the gag reflex.
- Always sit up straight when swallowing medications.
- Drink a whole glass of water while swallowing your medication.

If your medication may be taken with food, try taking it with a soft food like applesauce, yogurt, or pudding. Soft foods can be easier to swallow than liquids. If these techniques don't help, tell your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

| What to Take with Your Medication?

You should know if you may take your medication with food. Some oral chemotherapy drugs should be taken with food, while others should be taken on an empty stomach, and other drugs are not affected by food at all. Here are some points to remember:

- Taking certain medications with food can reduce the risk of side effects.
- For other medications, food can increase the chance of side effects.
- A full stomach might affect how well the body absorbs medication.
- In most cases, taking a drug without food means taking it either one hour before or two hours after a meal.
- Grapefruit can affect how some drugs work. You might need to avoid grapefruit products while taking certain drugs.
- Other medications, including over the counter, herbal supplements, and vitamins, can interact with your medication. Please tell your doctor and/or pharmacist everything that you are taking.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist if any of these apply to your medication.

| Know What to Do if You Miss a Dose

You should know what to do if you forget to take your medication, forget if you took your most recent dose, or throw up soon after taking a dose.

Be prepared. Ask your doctor or pharmacist in advance what you should do if you miss a dose. Find out when to tell your doctor about missed doses. With some drugs, you might need to tell your doctor if you miss even just one dose.

Don't simply skip a dose or take a double dose to "catch up" if something like this happens. If you aren't sure what to do, call your doctor or pharmacist right away.



What You Need to Know About Oral Chemotherapy

Continued

| *Make it Easy to Remember to Take Your Medication*

There are many ways to remind yourself to take your medication. Find ways that work for you and your schedule. Adjust them to suit your lifestyle.

Organize Your Medications

- Use a daily medication box (pill box) to organize your medication. A pill box can help you see each dose and remember if you have taken your medication for a particular day and time. Do this only if your medication does not need to stay in its original container and does not need special handling. All prescription drugs have information about how they should be kept. Read and follow the storage and handling requirements for your medication so your medications remain safe to take.
- If you take medications at different times each day, choose a pill box with extra dividers for morning, evening, bedtime, or hourly doses.
- Never put your medication in an unlabeled bottle or combine different medications in a single bottle. Even if you know what your medication looks like, it's easy to make mistakes.
- Carry an extra dose of each medication with you in case you misplace your medication box or are away from home longer than expected.

Use Alarms and Alerts

- Set an alarm on a clock, watch, or cellphone to remind yourself to take your medication.
- Some pill boxes have built-in alarms.
- Use a computer to set up a daily calendar alert or an email reminder.
- Use a medication reminder app to receive alerts on a smartphone or tablet.
- If needed, enlist the assistance of a caregiver to provide reminders.

Write it Down

- Write your medication schedule on a calendar near your medications.
- List each medication and when to take it.
- Include your medication on a daily to-do list. Check it off when you have taken it.

Stay on Schedule When Traveling

- Pack extra medication and bring reminders with you.
- Use alarms, instead of daily habits or chores, to remind you to take your medication.
- If you are crossing time zones, ask your doctor if you need to adjust your medication schedule.

| *Pregnancy, Breastfeeding, Sexual Activity, and Contraception*

- Some cancer drugs can cause birth defects. It is important to use birth control as directed to prevent pregnancy. This applies to men and women receiving treatment. The type of birth control to use will depend on your individual situation. Ask your doctor which form of birth control is best for you.
- A woman who is already pregnant when receiving a cancer diagnosis should discuss treatment options with her doctor. In some cases, treatment might be possible during certain stages of pregnancy. In other cases, it might be necessary to wait until after the baby is born.
- Many cancer drugs can pass into breast milk. They should not be taken while breastfeeding. This can be harmful to a baby. Ask your doctor when you can safely begin or resume breastfeeding after chemotherapy.
- Women should not become pregnant, and men should not get a partner pregnant while taking oral chemotherapy. Men and women of childbearing age and potential should use effective contraception during therapy and for a minimum of eight weeks after the last dose of everolimus.
- Effective contraception could include one or more of the following: oral contraceptive, barrier methods, etc.
- It is safe to hug and kiss. Special precautions may be needed for sexual activity while on oral chemotherapy, and you are encouraged to ask your care provider.

Coping with Side Effects



Some people don’t start taking their medication when they should.

Some skip doses because they are tired, don’t feel well, or are trying to avoid side effects. Others have depression, anxiety, or lack of energy that prevent them from taking their medication. If you are having challenges like these, talk with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. Your healthcare team can help, no matter how far off track you think you might be.

Many people worry about the side effects of cancer drugs. These concerns might make it hard to stay on track with your treatment. Try to have realistic expectations about how you will feel during treatment.

- If you already have had other types of chemotherapy, you might have certain expectations based on that experience.
- Your current treatment could have fewer or less severe side effects than past treatments. It might have different side effects. Do not think of oral chemotherapy as “more of the same” chemotherapy.
- Learn as much as you can about your medication’s side effects. Find tips on how to deal with them. This can help you get through your treatment.

Oral chemotherapy can have many side effects. These might include:

- Diarrhea
- Fatigue
- Nausea and vomiting
- Skin reactions

You might not have any of these side effects, but you might have others. Your Texas Oncology team is the best source of information about side effects and your health.



| Diarrhea

Chemotherapy can affect the cells lining the intestine. This can lead to diarrhea. Loose or watery bowel movements can affect how you feel. They can also dehydrate your body. In severe cases, your doctor might prescribe antidiarrheal drugs. Don’t take any over the counter (OTC) products for diarrhea without asking your doctor. Changing your diet could reduce diarrhea. This might mean following a brief diet of clear liquids or foods that are easy to digest while staying away from other foods. Small changes can help keep diarrhea from getting worse. Ask your doctor or nurse if changing your diet might help you.

| Follow a Clear Liquid Diet

Even when you do not feel like eating, it is important to replace fluids lost through diarrhea. Trying a liquid diet for a short time might help.

1. Choose clear, caffeine-free, and alcohol-free liquids like these:
 - › Apple juice, peach, or apricot nectar
 - › Clear broth
 - › Ginger ale
 - › Ice pops or gelatin desserts
 - › Sports drinks with electrolytes
 - › Water
 - › Weak, decaffeinated tea
2. Drink these liquids at room temperature. Let carbonated drinks lose their fizz before drinking them. This makes them easier on the stomach.
3. Sip liquids throughout the day. Do not try to drink a lot at one time.

| Choose Foods That Are Easy to Digest

If a clear liquid diet improves your diarrhea, you should be able to ease back into solid foods. Try foods that are easy to digest, such as bananas, rice, applesauce, and dry toast. This is often called the BRAT diet. Other foods that are easy to digest include mashed potatoes and yogurt (if dairy is tolerated). If your diarrhea continues to improve after a day or two on a BRAT diet, you might be able to begin trying small, regular meals.

| Avoid Foods and Drinks That Can Worsen Diarrhea

Many foods and drinks can irritate a touchy digestive system and make diarrhea worse. You might need to avoid some foods, such as:

- Acidic drinks like tomato juice, citrus juices, and fizzy soft drinks
- Alcohol, including beer, wine, and mixed drinks
- Caffeinated drinks like coffee, tea, colas, and energy drinks
- Greasy, fried, or spicy foods
- High-fiber foods like bran and raw fruits and vegetables
- Milk or milk products if they make diarrhea worse
- Nuts
- Sweets such as pastries, candy, or preserves

Coping with Side Effects

Continued

| When to Call the Doctor

The American Cancer Society recommends calling your doctor if you have any of the following:

- Loose bowel movements several times a day or for one to four days, depending on instructions given when treatment starts
- Anal bleeding or blood in the stool
- New belly pain or cramps or a swollen belly
- No urinating for 12 hours or more
- No ability to drink fluids for 24 hours or more
- A fever of a certain level when taken by mouth, as instructed when treatment starts
- Constipation for many days followed by small amounts of diarrhea or oozing of liquid stool

Always follow your doctor's instructions about when to call with your concerns.

| Fatigue

Fatigue is extreme tiredness. It can happen from time to time. It can also happen more regularly over a long period of time. It is the most common side effect of cancer treatment. It can also be caused by other things, including:

- Anemia, or low red blood cell count
- Dehydration, or extreme loss of body fluids
- Infection
- Pain
- Poor sleep

Fatigue can make you feel exhausted. It can also cause the following symptoms:

- Lack of energy
- Sleeping more
- Tiredness, even after sleeping
- Trouble concentrating or feeling motivated
- Trouble doing everyday things, like showering

Feeling fatigued does not necessarily mean your cancer is getting worse or that your treatment is not working. And it is not a sign of weakness or a lack of willpower or determination. Fatigue can affect your quality of life. For some, it can affect the ability to work, care for a family, or receive treatment. Only you know how much it is affecting you. Managing it can help you have the energy you need for daily activities and treatment.

Tell your doctor about your fatigue. Your doctor might ask you some questions, such as:

- When did the fatigue first start?
- When did you first notice that this fatigue is different?
 - › How long has it lasted?
 - › Does anything make it better? Worse?
 - › Are there times of day that you notice it more?
 - › How has the fatigue affected the things you do every day or the activities that give meaning and enjoyment to your life?

Your doctor might also check for other causes, like anemia or thyroid problems. The following tips can help you manage fatigue and feel better overall.

| Stay Active

When you are less active, you often feel more tired. Exercise can help control fatigue and restore your energy. It might also help you sleep better and improve your appetite.

- Talk to your doctor about how much activity is right for you.
- Choose activities you enjoy.
- Try gentle activities, like walking or bicycling.
- A physical therapist might be able to help you design an exercise program.
- Balance activity with rest.

| Eat Well

Fighting cancer affects how your body changes food into energy. The cancer is competing with the rest of your body for nutrients at a time when you might feel like eating less. It is easy to see how poor nutrition can contribute to fatigue during treatment. It is vital to find ways to keep a balanced diet that meets your body's needs.

- Try to have protein, fiber, and fat at each meal.
- Avoid sugary foods. They might give you an initial jolt of energy but leave you tired later.
- Drink plenty of caffeine-free fluids.
- Ask your doctor or a dietitian to help you build a diet to fight fatigue.
- Ask your doctor if you should take a multivitamin.

| Prioritize Tasks

Careful planning can help you work around your fatigue.

- Do the most difficult or most important tasks when you have the most energy. For some, this might be first thing in the morning. For others, it might be in the afternoon.
- Look at your to-do list. Skip anything that isn't truly necessary.
- Break large tasks into smaller ones.
- If possible, consider cutting back on work hours.

| Ask for Help

Though it might feel difficult at first, it is vital to ask others for help. Do not be embarrassed. Your family and friends want you to be well and are often willing to help. They might be able to help with many things, including:

- Grocery shopping and meal preparation
- Rides to and from medical appointments
- Housework, yard work, or childcare

Coping with Side Effects

Continued

| Manage Stress

Cancer and its treatment are stressful. Worry and anxiety can cause mental and physical fatigue. This can leave you feeling wiped out. Learning how to control stress can help you feel better.

- Talk to a counselor or join a cancer support group.
- Do not be afraid to ask your doctor or nurse questions about your treatment.
- Try to avoid situations that cause you stress.
- Find ways to relax. This might include sitting in a park, gardening, or walking in a pleasant setting.

| Get Enough Sleep

Getting enough sleep helps manage fatigue. Think of rest as an important part of your treatment. Schedule it into your daily routine.

- Aim for at least eight hours of sleep each night.
- If you nap, do so earlier in the day. Keep naps shorter than 30 minutes.
- As bedtime approaches, avoid things that can distract you from sleep such as exercising, having caffeine, or using electronic devices.
- Tell your doctor or nurse if you wake often during the night or have trouble falling asleep. They can offer guidance and suggestions on how to improve your sleep.

| Ask About Medications for Treating Fatigue

Sometimes fatigue is caused by things that do not improve through lifestyle changes alone. In these cases, you might need medication or other treatments to manage fatigue.

- For example, fatigue might be caused by anemia or a low red blood cell count. This can be a side effect of chemotherapy.
- Your doctor might prescribe medication to treat anemia. These drugs help the body create more red blood cells. In some cases, blood transfusions might also help.
- Fatigue might also have causes not related to anemia. Your doctor might prescribe different medications in these cases.

| Be Flexible

Try to be patient and flexible about what your body needs. This can change often. Work with your healthcare team to keep finding strategies that help.

- Not every approach works the same way for all people.
- Something that used to help might not work as well over time.
- Make a note of what helps and what doesn't.
- Notice any patterns. Work with your doctor to adjust things as needed.

| When to Call the Doctor

The American Cancer Society recommends calling your doctor if you have any of the following:

- You feel too tired to get out of bed for a 24-hour period
- You feel confused, dizzy, lose your balance, or fall
- You have problems waking up
- You have problems catching your breath
- The fatigue seems to be getting worse

Always follow your doctor's instructions about when to call with your concerns.

| Nausea and Vomiting

Nausea and vomiting are common side effects of cancer treatment. They can be unpleasant and difficult to deal with.

- Nausea makes you feel queasy or sick to your stomach.
- You might have a watery mouth, dizziness, or a fast heartbeat.
- Nausea can make you vomit or throw up. This can dehydrate your body.
- You might have a weak appetite. This can cause weight loss and affect your treatment.

Work with your healthcare team to prevent or reduce nausea and vomiting. This might include any of the following:

- Changing eating habits
- Avoiding spicy foods or any food/drink that irritates your stomach
- Taking antinausea drugs if prescribed by your doctor
- Other comfort measures

| Eat Well

How, what, and when you eat can affect how you feel during treatment. There will be times when you do not want to eat. To make eating easier, find nutritious foods you enjoy and take advantage of times when your appetite is strongest. Many people find that breakfast time is best. Here are some tips for days when you are feeling nauseated:

- Choose foods that you like, especially ones that are simple, bland, and easy to eat.
- Eat foods cold or at room temperature. This can lessen smells and tastes that might trigger nausea.
- If cooking smells bother you, ask someone else to prepare your meals.
- Instead of three large meals a day, eat smaller meals every two to three hours throughout the day. This might help you avoid feeling too hungry or too full, which might both trigger nausea.

If you are on a special diet for other conditions, like diabetes, talk with your doctor before changing your diet.

Coping with Side Effects

Continued

| Skin Reactions

Oral chemotherapy drugs might cause skin problems. Some cancer drugs target substances in the body that tell cancer cells to grow and multiply. These same substances are also found in normal skin cells. Drugs that target these substances often affect normal skin cells. They turn off the signals that tell normal skin cells to grow, making it harder for those cells to hold on to moisture. This can cause dry skin and rashes.

| How to Treat Dry Skin

Many people notice dry skin when taking oral chemotherapy drugs. Very dry skin is itchy, and scratching can lead to infection. You can take some simple steps to help avoid dry and itchy skin:

- Bathe or shower in lukewarm — not hot — water. Hot water can dry out your skin.
- Take short baths or showers. Do not scrub your skin. Pat yourself dry.
- Use an unscented, moisturizing cleanser. Added fragrances can irritate your skin.
- Use a hypoallergenic, water-based unscented body cream. Creams moisturize better than lotions. Apply cream after bathing, while your skin is still damp. This helps lock in moisture. Apply the cream twice a day.
- Avoid wearing rough fabrics and materials like wool and synthetic fibers, which can irritate your skin.
- Drink plenty of fluids. This will keep your skin hydrated.

| How to Manage a Rash

Most people who develop a rash from oral chemotherapy experience a mild skin eruption. It often looks like acne and can be itchy.

- The rash can start within the first two weeks of starting medication.
- The rash usually affects the scalp, face, chest, or upper back. In more severe cases, the rash can affect other parts of the body.
- Eventually, the skin crusts and becomes dry and red. Round, flat, or raised red spots and whitehead pimples with pus might appear.
- The rash can come and go. Sometimes it goes away on its own. It should go away completely about a month after finishing treatment.

Tell your doctor as soon as you notice signs of a rash. Early treatment can help prevent it from getting worse. Other simple steps can help you manage a rash:

- Avoid direct sunlight. Sunlight can trigger rashes in some people. Wear long sleeves and a hat outdoors. Use a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30 and zinc oxide or titanium dioxide at least one hour before going out.
- Bathe in lukewarm — not hot — water. Hot water can dry out your skin. Try an oatmeal bath product to soothe your skin.
- Don't treat the rash like acne. Don't use acne products like benzoyl peroxide. These can dry the skin.
- Moisturize your skin with a thick cream at least twice a day. Do this after bathing, while your skin is still damp. This helps lock in moisture.
- Use soaps, shampoos, moisturizers, and detergents that do not have alcohol, perfume, or dye.



Tell your doctor about any rashes or skin changes. Without treatment, these skin reactions can get worse and might cause infection. This would require pausing or even stopping cancer treatment. Do not treat your skin with over the counter products or stop taking your cancer drugs without talking to your doctor first.

If your doctor prescribes medication for skin reactions, use it as instructed. Tell your doctor if your skin does not improve. The table on the next page lists drugs often used to treat a rash. The list includes medicated creams and lotions to soothe skin. It also includes oral medications to control symptoms and eruptions.

Coping with Side Effects

Continued

MEDICATIONS FOR RASH

DRUG TYPE	NOTES
Antihistamines (diphenhydramine, loratadine)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These can help relieve itching, but have limited effectiveness.• Some of these are available as over the counter products.
Corticosteroid creams (hydrocortisone, triamcinolone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These can reduce inflammation and pain.• Prescription creams are stronger than over the counter creams.• Your doctor might prescribe different types or strengths of corticosteroids, depending on your rash.• Apply cream after cleaning skin gently with a mild, soap-free cleanser.• Use only as directed by your doctor, as prolonged use can cause other skin problems.
Oral antibiotics (doxycycline, minocycline, tetracycline)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These are often given for two weeks at a time; take only as prescribed.• It can take several weeks to see any change.• These can make you more sensitive to the sun; use daily sunscreen and avoid direct sunlight.
Over the counter pain relievers (acetaminophen, ibuprofen)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These can help relieve discomfort.• Ibuprofen also helps reduce swelling.
Topical antibiotics (clindamycin, erythromycin, metronidazole)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use carefully, as these can irritate and dry skin.• Use cotton swabs to apply medication to the affected area only and avoid drying the skin.• Your doctor might recommend using topical antibiotics every other day before moving to daily use.

| Hand-Foot Skin Reaction

Some oral chemotherapy drugs can cause a skin rash called hand-foot skin reaction (HFSR), often in the first few weeks of treatment. HFSR affects the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet. It can cause the following symptoms:

- Bleeding
- Blisters
- Feeling of “pins and needles”
- Numbness
- Redness
- Swelling
- Tingling

HFSR rashes can start out feeling like sunburn. This can later change into itchy or tender pimples or small red bumps.

Recognizing and treating HFSR early might prevent it from becoming severe. If you are taking medications that might cause HFSR, try the following tips to help prevent it:

- Avoid prolonged contact with hot water. This includes washing dishes or taking hot baths and showers.
- Avoid too much friction on your skin, particularly on your hands and feet. This might mean avoiding or limiting everyday activities like jogging, long walks, gardening with tools or even typing. This is especially important in the first month of treatment.
- Don’t wear tight shoes. Wear cotton socks. Use gel shoe inserts.

Use a moisturizing cream with urea to help soften thickened skin. Apply to skin right after bathing and again before bed. Cover with cotton gloves or socks while you sleep to help retain moisture.

Patient Rights and Responsibilities



Texas Oncology Pharmacy has a legal and ethical obligation to safeguard your patient rights and your protected health information. At all times, we strive to comply with the standards set forth below.

■ Patient's Bill of Rights

You, or your designated representative (if you have one), has the right to receive information from physicians and to discuss the benefits, risks, and costs of appropriate treatment alternatives. You should receive guidance from your physicians as to the optimal course of action. You are also entitled to obtain copies or summaries of your medical records, to have your questions answered, to be advised of potential conflicts of interest that your physicians might have, and to receive independent professional opinions. You also have the right to:

1. Be fully informed in advance about care/service to be provided, including the disciplines that furnish care and the frequency of visits, as well as any modifications to the plan of care.
2. Be informed in advance of care/service being provided and your financial responsibility.
3. Receive information about the scope of services that we will provide and specific limitations on these services.
4. Participate in the development and periodic revisions of the plan of care.
5. Refuse care or treatment after the consequences of refusing care or treatment are fully presented.
6. Be informed of your rights under state law to formulate an advanced directive, if applicable.
7. Be treated with respect, consideration, and recognition of your dignity and individuality.
8. Be able to identify visiting personnel members through proper identification.
9. Be free from mistreatment, neglect, or verbal mental, sexual, and physical abuse, including injuries of unknown sources.
10. Voice grievances/complaints regarding treatment or care or lack of respect of property, or recommend changes in policy, personnel, or care/service without restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination, or reprisal.
11. Have grievances/complaints regarding treatment or care that is (or fail to be) furnished, or lack of respect of property investigated.
12. Confidentiality and privacy of all protected health information.
13. Be advised on policies and procedures regarding the disclosure of medical records.
14. Choose a healthcare provider, including an attending physician, if applicable.
15. Receive appropriate care without discrimination in accordance with physician's orders, if applicable.
16. Be informed of any financial benefits when referred to an organization.
17. Be fully informed of your responsibilities.

■ Patient's Responsibilities

As a patient, you or your designated representative (if you have one), have a responsibility to:

1. Submit forms, insurance cards, or other documents that are necessary to receive services.
2. Provide accurate medical, pharmacy, and contact information and any changes.
 - › Provide, to the best of your ability, accurate and complete information about your present condition, past illnesses, hospitalizations, medications, and other matters related to your health, including information about home and work that may impact your ability to follow the proposed treatment.
 - › Tell the healthcare team if you have an advance directive and the intent it contains.
 - › Let the healthcare team know when you experience pain or when the pain relief is not working.
 - › Notify your physician and the pharmacy of any potential side effects and/or complications.
 - › Notify the treating provider of participation in the services provided by the organization.
 - › Tell your caregivers about any changes in your health.
3. Maintain any equipment provided, if applicable.
4. Notify your healthcare team of any concerns about the care or services provided.
 - › Ask questions so that you may understand your health problems and what to reasonably expect during your treatment.
 - › You are responsible for asking questions, especially if you do not understand or need more information.
5. Make informed decisions.
 - › If you are unable to make decisions about your care, your legally appointed decision-maker has a responsibility to make healthcare decisions that are consistent with your values and life goals.
 - › You should actively participate in your care and follow the instructions for taking medication as directed. Follow the mutually agreed to treatment plan developed with your provider.
 - › Express any concerns about your ability to understand or comply with a proposed course of treatment.
 - › You are responsible for the outcomes if you refuse treatment or do not follow your care provider's instructions.
 - › Remain adherent to your treatment plan, and work with your Texas Oncology care team to address any obstacles that may prevent you from following your plan.

Patient Rights and Responsibilities

Continued

- 6. Accept financial responsibilities.
 - › Provide information necessary for claims processing.
 - › You are responsible for meeting your financial responsibility in a timely manner.
- 7. Support Texas Oncology policies that apply to patient care and conduct.
 - › Respect privacy and confidentiality of other patients.
 - › Express any needs you may have, so we can provide reasonable accommodation.
 - › Inform the healthcare team when you have issues or concerns related to your safety.



Notice of Privacy Practices

Notice Informing Individuals About Nondiscrimination and Accessibility Requirements

Texas Oncology complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. Texas Oncology does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

Texas Oncology

- Provides free aids and services to people with disabilities to communicate effectively with us, such as:
 - › Qualified sign language interpreters
 - › Written information in other formats (large print, audio, accessible electronic formats, other formats)
- Provides free language services to people whose primary language is not English, such as:
 - › Qualified interpreters
 - › Information written in other languages

If you need these services, contact your local Texas Oncology practice or call 1-888-864-4226.

If you believe that Texas Oncology has failed to provide these services or discriminated in another way on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex, you can file a grievance with: Texas Oncology, Clinical Services, 12377 Merit Drive, Suite 700, Dallas, TX 75251; T: 1-888-864-4226; Email: txocares@usoncology.com. You can

file a grievance in person or by mail, fax, or email.

You may file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, electronically through the Office for Civil Rights Complaint Portal, available at <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf>, or by mail or phone at:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 509F, HHH Building
Washington, D.C. 20201

Complaint forms are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html>.

Patient Privacy

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

Effective Date: September 19, 2024

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.

About Us

In this Notice, we use terms like “we,” “us,” “our,” or “Practice” to refer to **Texas Oncology**, its physicians, employees, staff, and other personnel. All of the sites and locations of **Texas Oncology** follow the terms of this Notice and may share health information with each other for treatment, payment or healthcare operations purposes and for other purposes as described in this Notice.

Notice of Privacy Practices

Continued

| Purpose of This Notice

This Notice describes how we may use and disclose your health information to carry out treatment, payment, or health care operations and for other purposes that are permitted or required by law. This Notice also outlines our legal duties for protecting the privacy of your health information and explains your rights to have your health information protected. We will create a record of the services we provide you, and this record will include your health information. We need to maintain this information to ensure that you receive quality care and to meet certain legal requirements related to providing you care. We understand that your health information is personal, and we are committed to protecting your privacy and ensuring that your health information is not used inappropriately.

| Our Responsibilities

We are required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information and to provide you notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your health information. We are also required to notify you of a breach of your unsecured health information. We will abide by the terms of this Notice.

| How We May Use or Disclose Your Health Information

The following categories describe examples of the way we use and disclose health information without your written authorization:

For Treatment: We may use and disclose your health information to provide you with medical treatment or services. For example, your health information will be shared with your oncology doctor and other health care providers who participate in your care. We may disclose your health information to another oncologist for the purpose of a consultation. We may also disclose your health information to your primary care physician or another health care provider to be sure they have all the information necessary to diagnose and treat you.

For Payment: We may use and disclose your health information to others so they will pay us or reimburse you for your treatment. For example, a bill may be sent to you, your insurance company, or a third-party payer. The bill may contain information that identifies you, your diagnosis, and treatment or supplies used in the course of treatment. We may also tell your health plan about a treatment you are going to receive to obtain prior approval or to determine whether your health plan will cover the treatment.

For Health Care Operations: We may use and disclose your health information in order to support our business activities. These uses and disclosures are necessary to run the Practice and make sure our patients receive quality care. For example, we may use your health information for quality assessment activities, training of medical students, necessary credentialing, and for other essential activities. We may also disclose your health information to third-party “business associates” that perform various services on our behalf, such as transcription, billing, and collection services. In these cases, we will enter into a written agreement with the business associate to ensure they protect the privacy of your health information.

We may ask you to sign your name to a sign-in sheet at the registration desk, and we may call your name in the waiting room when we call you for your appointment.

Appointment Reminders: We may use and disclose your health information in order to contact you and remind you of an upcoming appointment for treatment or health care services.

Individuals Involved in Your Care or Payment for Your Care and Notification: If you verbally agree to the use or disclosure and in certain other situations, we will make the following uses and disclosures of your health information. We may disclose to your family, friends, and anyone else whom you identify who is involved in your medical care or who helps pay for your care, health information relevant to that person’s involvement in your care or paying for your care. We may also make these disclosures after your death.

If you would like us to refrain from releasing your health information to a family member or friend who is involved in your care, you must make your request in writing and submit it to the Medical Records Manager of your local Texas Oncology office.

We may use or disclose your information to notify or assist in notifying a family member, personal representative, or any other person responsible for your care regarding your physical location within the Practice, general condition, or death. We may also use or disclose your health information to disaster-relief organizations so that your family or other persons responsible for your care can be notified about your condition, status, and location.

We are also allowed to the extent permitted by applicable law to use and disclose your health information without your authorization for the following purposes:

Serious Threat to Health or Safety: If there is a serious threat to your health and safety or the health and safety of the public or another person, we may use and disclose your health information to someone able to help prevent the threat or as necessary for law enforcement authorities to identify or apprehend an individual.

Organ/Tissue Donation: If you are an organ donor, we may use and disclose your health information to organizations that handle procurement, transplantation, or banking of organs, eyes, or tissues.

Workers’ Compensation: We may disclose your health information as authorized by and to the extent necessary to comply with laws related to workers’ compensation or similar programs that provide benefits for work-related injuries or illness.

Victims of Abuse, Neglect, or Domestic Violence: We may disclose health information to the appropriate government authority if we believe a patient has been the victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence. We will only make this disclosure if you agree, or when required or authorized by law.

Military and Veterans Activities: If you are a member of the Armed Forces, we may disclose your health information to military command authorities. Health information about foreign military personnel may be disclosed to foreign military authorities.

Notice of Privacy Practices

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National Security and Intelligence Activities: We may disclose your health information to authorized federal officials for intelligence, counterintelligence, and other national security activities authorized by law.

Protective Services for the President and Others: We may disclose your health information to authorized federal officials so they may provide protective services for the president and others, including foreign heads of state.

Inmates: If you are an inmate of a correctional institution or under the custody of a law enforcement official, we may disclose your health information to the correctional institution or law enforcement official to assist them in providing your health care, protecting your health and safety or the health and safety of others, or for the safety of the correctional institution.

Research: We may use and disclose your health information for certain research activities without your written authorization. For example, we might use some of your health information to decide if we have enough patients to conduct a cancer research study. For certain research activities, an Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Privacy Board may approve uses and disclosures of your health information without your authorization.

As Required by Law: We may use and disclose your health information when required to do so by federal, state, or local law.

Prohibited Uses

Federal law prohibits use and disclosure of your health information for criminal, civil, or administrative investigations or proceedings for the “mere act of” seeking, obtaining, providing, or facilitating reproductive health care that was legal when it was provided is prohibited. This type of information cannot be shared without first getting an assurance from the third party requesting your health information that the information will not be used to charge you with a crime.

Examples of reproductive health care include but are not limited to; birth control, pregnancy screening, prenatal care, miscarriage management, pregnancy termination, and other types of care, procedures, services, and supplies used for the diagnosis and treatment of conditions related to the reproductive system.

Texas Oncology will obtain a written and signed attestation in the following circumstances from the person requesting the information that it will not be used to charge you with a crime.

Judicial and Administrative Proceedings: If you are involved in a legal proceeding, we may disclose your health information in response to a court or administrative order. We may also release your health information in response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process by someone else involved in the dispute, but only if efforts have been made to tell you about the request or to obtain an order protecting the information requested.

Health Oversight Activities: We may use and disclose your health information to health oversight agencies for activities authorized by law. These oversight activities are necessary for the government to monitor the health care system, government benefit programs, compliance with government regulatory programs, and compliance with civil rights laws.

Law Enforcement: We may disclose your health information, within limitations, to law enforcement officials for several different purposes:

- To comply with a court order, warrant, subpoena, summons, or other similar process;
- To identify or locate a suspect, fugitive, material witness, or missing person;
- About the victim of a crime, if the victim agrees or we are unable to obtain the victim’s agreement;
- About a death we suspect may have resulted from criminal conduct;
- About criminal conduct we believe in good faith to have occurred on our premises; and
- To report a crime not occurring on our premises, the nature of a crime, the location of a crime, and the identity, description, and location of the individual who committed the crime, in an emergency situation.

Public Health Activities: We may use and disclose your health information for public health activities, including the following:

- To prevent or control disease, injury, or disability;
 - To report births or deaths;
 - To report child abuse or neglect;
 - Activities related to the quality, safety, or effectiveness of FDA-regulated products;
 - To notify a person who may have been exposed to a communicable disease or may be at risk for contracting or spreading a disease or condition as authorized by law; and
 - To notify an employer of findings concerning work-related illness or injury or general medical surveillance that the employer needs to comply with the law if you are provided notice of such disclosure.
- Coroners, Medical Examiners, and Funeral Directors:** We may use and disclose health information to a coroner or medical examiner. This disclosure may be necessary to identify a deceased person or determine the cause of death. We may also disclose health information, as necessary, to funeral directors to assist them in performing their duties.
- Other Uses and Disclosures of Your Health Information that Require Written Authorization:**
- Other uses and disclosures of your health information not covered by this Notice will be made only with your written authorization. Some examples include:
- **Psychotherapy Notes:** We usually do not maintain psychotherapy notes about you. If

Notice of Privacy Practices

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we do, we will only use and disclose them with your written authorization except in limited situations.

- **Marketing and Fundraising:** We may only use and disclose your health information for marketing or fundraising purposes with your written authorization. This would include making treatment communications to you when we receive a financial benefit for doing so.
- **Sale of Your Health Information:** We may sell your health information only with your written authorization.
- **Drug Treatment Records:** Records related to the diagnosis, treatment and/or rehabilitation of Substance Abuse Disorder may not be used or disclosed in a civil, criminal, administrative, or legislative proceeding against the individual absent written consent from the individual or a court order.

If you authorize us to use or disclose your health information, you may revoke your authorization, in writing, at any time. If you revoke your authorization, we will no longer use or disclose your health information as specified by your revocation, except to the extent that we have taken action in reliance on your authorization.

If you give permission to share your identifiable health information with a person or business, the information may no longer be protected. There is a risk that your information will be released to others without your permission.

Your Rights Regarding Your Health Information

You have the following rights regarding the health information we maintain about you:

Right to Request Restrictions: You have the right to request restrictions on how we use and disclose your health information for treatment, payment, or health care operations. **In most circumstances, we are not required to agree to your request.** If we do agree, we will comply with your request unless the information is needed to provide you emergency treatment. To request restrictions, you must make your request in writing and submit it to your local Texas Oncology office. We are required to agree to a request that we restrict a disclosure made to a health plan for payment or health care operations purposes that is not otherwise required by law, if you, or someone other than the health plan on your behalf, paid for the service or item in question out-of-pocket in full.

Right to Request Confidential Communications: You have the right to request that we communicate with you in a certain manner or at a certain location regarding the services you receive from us. For example, you may ask that we only contact you at work or only by mail. To request confidential communications, you must make your request in writing and submit it to your local Texas Oncology office. We will not ask you the reason for your request. We will attempt to accommodate all reasonable requests.

Right to Inspect and Copy: You have the right to inspect and copy health information that may be used to make decisions about your care. To inspect and copy your health information, you must make your request in writing by filling out the appropriate form provided by us and submitting it to your local Texas Oncology office. You may request access to your medical information in a certain electronic form and format if readily producible or, if not readily producible, in a mutually agreeable electronic form and format. Further, you may request in writing that we transmit a copy of your health information to any person or entity you designate. Your written, signed request must clearly identify such designated person or entity and where you would like us to send the copy. If you request a copy of your health information, we may charge a cost-based fee for the labor, supplies, and postage required to meet your request.

We may deny your request to inspect and copy in certain very limited circumstances. If you are denied access to your health information, you may request that the denial be reviewed by a licensed health care professional chosen by us. The person conducting the review will not be the person who denied your request. We will comply with the outcome of the review.

Right to Amend: If you feel that your health information is incorrect or incomplete, you may request that we amend your information. You have the right to request an amendment for as long as the information is kept by or for us. To request an amendment, you must make your request in writing by filling out the appropriate form provided by us

and submitting it to your local Texas Oncology office.

We may deny your request for an amendment. If this occurs, you will be notified of the reason for the denial and given the opportunity to file a written statement of disagreement with us that will become part of your medical record.

Right to an Accounting of Disclosures: You have the right to request an accounting of disclosures we make of your health information. Please note that certain disclosures need not be included in the accounting we provide to you.

To request an accounting of disclosures, you must make your request in writing by filling out the appropriate form provided by us and submitting it to your local Texas Oncology office. Your request must state a time period which may not be longer than six years, and which may not include dates before April 14, 2003. The first accounting you request within a 12-month period will be free. For additional accountings, we may charge you for the costs of providing the accounting. We will notify you of the costs involved and give you an opportunity to withdraw or modify your request before any costs have been incurred.

Right to a Paper Copy of This Notice: You have the right to a paper copy of this Notice at any time, even if you previously agreed to receive this Notice electronically. To obtain a paper copy of this Notice, please contact your local Texas Oncology office. You may also obtain a paper copy of this Notice at our website, www.TexasOncology.com.

Notice of Privacy Practices

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Changes to This Notice

We reserve the right to change the terms of this Notice at any time. We reserve the right to make the new Notice provisions effective for all health information we currently maintain, as well as any health information we receive in the future. If we make material or important changes to our privacy practices, we will promptly revise our Notice. We will post a copy of the current Notice in the waiting area of your local Texas Oncology office. Each version of the Notice will have an effective date listed on the first page. Updates to this Notice are also available at our website, www.TexasOncology.com.

Complaints: If you have any questions about this Notice or would like to file a complaint about our privacy practices, please direct your inquiries to: Texas Oncology at 1-888-864-ICAN (4226) and ask for the Privacy Officer. You may also file a complaint with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. You will not be retaliated against or penalized for filing a complaint.

Questions: If you have questions about this Notice, please contact Texas Oncology at 1-888-864-ICAN (4226) and ask for the Privacy Officer.



Patient Satisfaction and Grievances

Patient Satisfaction

Our patients are 95%+ satisfied or very satisfied with the care, support, and services they receive from Texas Oncology Pharmacy. We strive to provide our patients with the highest quality of service and care. To monitor our performance, we periodically survey our patients. In addition, insurance companies and other regulatory agencies also require regular surveying of our patients and their satisfaction with Texas Oncology Pharmacy. Please notify us in writing if you do not wish to be contacted for these surveys.

Our patient satisfaction survey is also available online, on demand for you to share your experiences whenever you desire.

Patient Satisfaction Survey link:
www.texasoncology.com/pharmacy-satisfaction

Concerns or Grievances

If you are not satisfied with any aspect of your experience with Texas Oncology Pharmacy, we want to know about it. You and your family have a right to voice any concerns regarding the care you have received and have those concerns reviewed and resolved when possible. If you or someone on your behalf expresses a concern, your care and access to Texas Oncology Pharmacy will not be compromised. You are encouraged to contact any present staff, the manager or director of the department, or patient relations verbally or in writing. When contacting us, please provide your name, date of birth, and a specific description of the date, time, people involved, etc.

You may contact us by telephone at 1-800-778-9577 (toll free) or visit texasoncology.com/services-and-treatments/pharmacy-services/pharmacy-complaint-and-grievances. You may also contact us by U.S. mail:

Texas Oncology Pharmacy
12377 Merit Dr. #700
Dallas, TX 75251

You may also file a grievance with the appropriate governing, regulating, or credentialing body regardless of whether you have first used a Texas Oncology Pharmacy grievance process.

Accreditation Commission for Health Care
Complaint Information

www.achc.org
855-937-2242

State of Texas Board of Pharmacy Complaint
Information
www.pharmacy.texas.gov/consumer/complaint.asp
1801 Congress Avenue, Suite 13.100,
Austin, Texas 78701-1319
512-305-8000

Understanding Medical Directives



Creating a written document clearly stating your preferences for future medical care and end-of-life care is an essential part of the advance care planning process. The document will clearly state your values and wishes, as well as support your healthcare advocate in carrying out those wishes.

- A **Medical Power of Attorney (MPOA)** allows you to legally appoint a healthcare advocate to make medical decisions on your behalf. A medical power of attorney can be enacted even if you are not diagnosed with a terminal disease. We can assist you with drafting this document.
- An **advance directive (living will)** allows you to clearly state your wishes for medical treatment at the end of life. Unlike a medical power of attorney, an advance directive can only be enacted if you are unable to communicate your wishes. Our social workers can assist you with filling out the paperwork to ensure that your decisions are legally protected.
- Most advance directives do not include a **Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Order**. A DNR formally states you do not want further medical intervention if your heart stops or you stop breathing. We can help you complete this directive with your doctors and healthcare advocate, if these are your wishes.

Review your advance care planning documents regularly to ensure your wishes and values remain aligned with the formal documents in place regarding future medical care. Be sure to inform your healthcare advocate if you change any documents.



Choosing a Healthcare Advocate

Perhaps one of the most important decisions to be made in the advance care planning process is choosing a healthcare advocate. A healthcare advocate can be a family member, close friend, or someone else you trust to make decisions in accordance with your wishes, but should be designated through legal documentation.

It is important to have ongoing discussions with your healthcare advocate about your future medical choices, including specifics about when and what medical treatment options you prefer, because your decisions may change over time. In order to legally empower this person to carry out healthcare wishes and decisions when you are unable to do so, please fill out a medical power of attorney. Some questions to ask a potential advocate include:

- Do you understand my wishes, values, and treatment goals?
- Are you willing to follow my preferences, even if others disagree?
- Can you uphold my wishes, even if others challenge my decisions?

Putting Your Wishes into Writing

Creating a written document that states your preference for future and end-of-life medical care is an essential part of the advance care planning process. Advance directives, also referred to as a living will or medical power of attorney, are formal legal documents and generally meet state requirements, when completed by an adult over age 18.

- **Medical Power of Attorney:** A medical power of attorney allows you to legally appoint a healthcare advocate to make medical decisions on your behalf. It can be enacted even if you are not diagnosed with a terminal disease. It is not required that an attorney draft a medical power of attorney.
- **Directive to Family, Physicians, and Surrogates:** One of the most common documents, this directive informs your family, physicians, and surrogates of your instructions about your medical treatments should you be unable to communicate your wishes. Sharing this information with your family and medical team is a 'gift,' and it empowers you to direct your care, when you cannot communicate to direct your care.
- **Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Order:** A do not resuscitate (DNR) order is separate from a directive to family, physicians, and surrogates. An Out-of-Hospital Do Not Resuscitate (OOH DNR) order is a legal document that formally requests that if your heart stops or you stop breathing that you do not wish for medical intervention. If you do not want life-sustaining measures outside of the hospital, you will need to complete an OOH DNR order, which is signed by your physician.

- **Medical Order for Scope of Treatment (MOST)/ Physician Order for Scope of Treatment (POST):** The MOST/POST form may be called different things in different states. It is a portable medical order where the plan for the level of care and treatment the patient wants is documented. These fall into three categories: full, selective, and comfort care interventions. Documentation includes instructions regarding cardiopulmonary resuscitation, intubation and mechanical ventilation, and artificial nutrition. MOST/POST forms are appropriate for individuals with a serious illness or frailty near the end of life.

Most states have forms available to document future healthcare wishes. Varieties of commercial forms are available. Less formal, but possibly effective forms include documented conversations with a physician and a handwritten letter signed by you. Additional information on specific state requirements is available through your local state department website or the National Hospice and Palliative Care website.

More information, a guide about advance care planning, and links to additional resources are available on Texas Oncology's website:
www.texasoncology.com/patients/advance-care-planning



www.texasoncology.com

Updated January 2025

TEXAS  ONCOLOGY

More breakthroughs. More victories.®