

londoncancergroup

care, innovation, excellence

Chemotherapy Patient Information

Please read this booklet carefully and carry it with you at all times while you are having treatment.

YOUR DETAILS

Name.....

Date of Birth.....

Hospital Number.....

Address.....

.....

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.....

.....

Phone number.....

YOUR DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

Diagnosis.....

.....

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Type of chemotherapy.....

.....

Radiotherapy.....

.....

Allergies.....

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Carry this booklet at all times while you are having treatment.

Show it to your GP, dentist, chemist or other practitioner before you receive any treatment or medication.

What is chemotherapy?

Chemotherapy is treatment with cancer-killing drugs. They may be taken as tablets or capsules, but are more commonly given as injections or drips into a vein.

You may receive just one drug or a combination of drugs, a regimen.

Chemotherapy may be given on its own or together with surgery, radiotherapy or other drugs.

You will be provided with a Cancer BACUP Fact sheet for the drugs / regimen you are to receive. These will provide more detailed information.

Things to tell us

Please let us know as soon as possible if you have any of the following:

- ▲ **Any new symptoms.**
The sooner we know the sooner we can treat them.
- ▲ **A temperature of 38oC or greater.**
You may have an infection that needs treatment.
- ▲ **Uncontrollable sickness and or vomiting.**
We can change your anti-sickness drugs.
- ▲ **Uncontrolled diarrhoea.**
We can advise you on how best to control.
- ▲ **Constipation for more than TWO days.**
We can advise you on treatment and prevention.
- ▲ **A painful / sore mouth with or without ulcers.**
We can provide you with mouthwashes.
- ▲ **Redness or burning around injection site.**
This may need emergency treatment.
- ▲ **You develop a cold sore or shingles.**
Earlier treatment is more successful.

Infections following chemotherapy

6 When you have chemotherapy your ability to fight against infection is reduced. This is because the chemotherapy temporarily reduces the number of white blood cells in your blood this is commonly referred to as neutropenia. It is the white cells that fight against infection.

If you notice any of the signs of infection listed below please contact your consultant or us straight away.

- ▲ **A raised temperature** that is
 - above 38oC at any time OR
 - above 37.5 oC on any two readings taken an hour or more apart.
- ▲ **Uncontrollable shivering or shaking**
- ▲ **A sore throat**
- ▲ **A cough or shortness of breath**
- ▲ **Diarrhoea**
- ▲ **Burning or discomfort when you pass urine.**
- ▲ **A rash.**
- ▲ **If you feel unwell in any other way.**

If you think you have an infection contact us straight away. We may need to give you antibiotics to help you fight the infection.

Preventing Infections

During chemotherapy treatment you should try to avoid:

- ▲ Contact with anyone with an obvious infection.
- ▲ Unpasteurised milk and cheese or live yoghurt.
- ▲ Raw or uncooked eggs.
- ▲ Re-heated food.
- ▲ Undercooked food such as pâté.
- ▲ Take away meals.
- ▲ Changing of nappies of recently vaccinated children.
- ▲ Animals and their excrement.
- ▲ Cuts whilst gardening.

Preventing Infections

During chemotherapy treatment you should try to:

- ▲ Wash your hands before you eat or prepare food.
- ▲ Only eat eggs bearing the Lion quality mark (UK).
- ▲ Carefully wash or peel all fruit, vegetables and salads.
- ▲ Wash your hands after handling animals, fresh flowers or potted plants.
- ▲ Clean your teeth at least twice a day (using a soft bristled/children's toothbrush)
- ▲ Use any mouthwashes you have been supplied.
- ▲ A flu vaccine may be helpful but discuss with us first.

Your medicines

- ▲ Keep your medicines in a safe place away from children.
- ▲ Do not take other medicines without talking to us first.
- ▲ Many of your tablets should only be taken for a short time. This is particularly important for steroid tablets and chemotherapy tablets that are often only taken for a few days at a time.
- ▲ If you are taking alternative or complimentary medicines please check with your Consultant or one of our Pharmacists that they will not interfere with your chemotherapy treatment.
- ▲ You will be provided with a schedule of your medicines by one of our Pharmacists before you go home.
- ▲ Discuss ALL your current medicines with one of our Oncology Pharmacists.

Sickness following chemotherapy

8 Chemotherapy drugs can sometimes cause nausea (feeling sick) or vomiting (being sick). This may occur straight away or up to several days after your chemotherapy.

You will be given anti-sickness injections along with your chemotherapy to prevent sickness.

When you go home you will be supplied with anti-sickness tablets that you will need to take to make sure you are not sick when the injections wear off.

Your Pharmacist or Nurse will provide you with a list of your anti-sickness medicines and explain how these tablets should be taken.

If you vomit or feel sick at home even though you have taken your anti-sickness tablets please let us know. We may be able to change your tablets to reduce your sickness.

Extravasation of chemotherapy

9 When your chemotherapy is injected it should enter your vein. On rare occasions the chemotherapy may leak into the surrounding tissue this is called "Extravasation". Some drugs can cause damage if they leak from the vein (extravasate). Your chemotherapy nurse is specially trained to administer the chemotherapy so that the risk of extravasation is reduced.

It is important that you tell us straight away if:

- ▲ You notice any stinging or burning around the injection site while your chemotherapy is being given.
- ▲ The area around the injection site becomes red or swollen at any time, even when you are at home.

YOUR CHEMOTHERAPY RECORD

Regimen.....

Course number..... Date.....

Dose modification.....

Blood count

WBC	Neu	Plts	Hb

Drug	Dose

Other drugs with this course

Notes

YOUR DIARY OF SIDE-EFFECTS

Please tick any side effects you experience following this course of chemotherapy.

Type	None	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Very severe
Tiredness	None	Normal activity	Rest less than half of each day	Rest more than half of each day	Bed bound
Nausea	None	Nausea	Some vomiting	Need extra medicines	Constant vomiting
Mouth	Normal	Sore	Ulcers but can eat	Ulcers liquids only	Cannot eat/drink
Hair	Normal	Some loss	Patchy loss	Complete loss	
Constipation	None	Mild	Moderate	Bloating	Vomiting
Diarrhoea	None	Less than two day	More than two days	Intolerable	Bloody or in hospital
Fingers and toes	Normal	Tingling numbness	Moderate tingling, numbness and some weakness	Severe tingling, numbness and weakness	Intolerable tingling, numbness and weakness
Pain	None	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Intolerable
Skin	Please describe any changes you notice in your skin				
Infection	Please give a brief description of any infection you have had.				
Other (please state)		Mild	Moderate	Severe	Very Severe

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The Harley Street Cancer Centre

020 7935 7700

The Lister Hospital

020 7730 3417

London Bridge Hospital

020 7407 3100

The Portland Hospital

020 7580 4400

The Princess Grace Hospital

020 7486 1234

The Wellington Hospital

020 7586 5959

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