

chapping.

- Seek your doctor's advice if there are too many sores.

Low Blood Count & Infections

- This complication may occur 7-14 days after chemotherapy.
- Check your blood count if you experience difficulty in breathing
- Have Iron rich food like dark, green leafy vegetables, beans and sweet potatoes.
- Take breaks/ rest between activities.
- Plan your day ahead so that you don't get tired.
- Call your doctor immediately if you have fever above 38.5C/100.4F
- Drink plenty of liquids like water, fruit juices, ice pos and soups.
- Apply cold compress on your forehead if you feel warm.
- Follow medications as per instructions.

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

- Always wear a mask when you go to crowded/ public places.
- Use well-cooked home made food.
- Always keep your hands clean. Wash you hands well before eating and after using the toilet.
- Try to get 7-8 hours of sleep daily.
- Avoid contact with people who aren't keeping well - e.g those with fever, cold etc.
- Avoid contact with flowers/ don't smell flowers.
- Do not undergo any parallel/ alternative medicine treatment like Ayurveda etc. while on chemotherapy.
- Use only an electric razor for shaving.
- Follow a healthy lifestyle - sleep well, wake up on time, bathe everyday and eat

healthy. Praying will help calm your mind.

- Inform your doctor about any other health complications like diabetes and hypertension.
- Do not receive vaccines without doctor's order.
- Avoid stressful activities.
- Take precautions against cuts - e.g. wear a protective finger cap when cutting vegetables/ fruits.
- It is advisable to shave off your hair before the treatment as chemotherapy can cause heavy hair loss.

Remember, one can always fight a winning battle against cancer. Keep the faith and stay positive. Get well soon!



PLEASE SCAN FOR
THE LOCATION

Aster
HOSPITAL
We'll Treat You Well

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Digital Version

**CHEMOTHERAPY:
WHAT YOU NEED
TO KNOW**



WHAT IS CHEMOTHERAPY?

Chemotherapy is the use of drugs to treat cancers. Often referred to as “Chemo”, this treatment works on the body.

HOW DOES CHEMOTHERAPY WORK?

Chemotherapy works by stopping or slowing the growth of cancer cells, which grow and divide quickly. But it can also harm healthy cells that divide quickly, such as those that line your mouth and intestines or cause your hair to grow. Damage to healthy cells may cause side effects. Often, side effects get better or go away after chemotherapy is over.

WHAT DOES CHEMOTHERAPY DO?

The chemotherapy, depending upon the kind of cancer, can:

- **Cure cancer:** Chemotherapy can destroy cancer cells to the extent that they get eliminated completely and does not grow back.

- **Control cancer:** Chemotherapy can stop/ prevent cancer from spreading, slow its growth and destroy cancer cells that have spread to other parts of the body.

- **Ease cancer symptoms:** Chemotherapy can shrink the tumor(s) that is causing pain or pressure.

HOW IS CHEMOTHERAPY USED?

At times, chemotherapy is used as the only mode of treatment for cancer. Chemotherapy is also recommended along with surgery, radiation therapy or biological therapy to manage more aggressive forms of cancer.

Chemotherapy works in the following ways:

Makes a tumor smaller before surgery or radiation therapy.

This is called neo-adjuvant chemotherapy.

Destroys cancer cells that may remain after surgery or radiation therapy. This

is called adjuvant chemotherapy. Help radiation therapy and biological therapy work better. Destroy cancer cells that have come back (recurrent cancer) or spread to other parts of the body (metastatic cancer).

The kind of chemotherapy drugs induced depends on:

- The type of cancer.
- Whether the patient has undergone chemotherapy before.
- Whether the patient has other health problems like diabetes or heart disease.

HOW OFTEN IS CHEMOTHERAPY GIVEN?

Treatment schedules for chemotherapy vary according to:

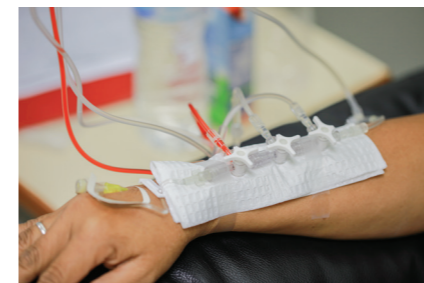
- The type of cancer
- The stage/ how advanced the cancer is
- Goals of the treatment - whether it is to cure the cancer or ease symptoms
- How the body reacts to chemotherapy
- The type of chemotherapy

Chemotherapy is usually given in cycles. A cycle is a period of chemotherapy treatment followed by a period of rest. For instance, a patient may undergo 1 week of chemotherapy, followed by 3 weeks of rest. These 4 weeks make up one cycle. The rest period allows the body to regenerate new cells.

WHAT HAPPENS IF ONE MISSES A DOSE OF CHEMOTHERAPY?

It is not advisable to skip a chemotherapy cycle. However, the treating doctor may change the chemotherapy schedule for reasons including side-effects. The doctor or nurse will explain the causes in detail and prove the next scheduled date for the treatment.

HOW IS CHEMOTHERAPY GIVEN?



Injection: Chemotherapy drugs are administered through a shot in the leg, hip, thigh, arm, under the skin in the fatty part of the arm or stomach.

A) Intravenous (IV): Chemotherapy drug is administered directly through the vein.

B) Intra-arterial (IA): Chemotherapy is administered directly in artery that is feeding the cancer.

C) Intraperitoneal (IP): Chemotherapy is administered in peritoneal cavity (where the intestines, stomach, liver and ovaries are).

Chemotherapy drugs also come in the form of:

Oral: Pills, capsules, or liquids that can be swallowed.

Topical: Cream form, can be rubbed into the skin.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO WORK DURING CHEMOTHERAPY TREATMENT?

It's perfectly fine to work while the chemotherapy treatment is on. However, one should work only if he/she is up to it. or opt for work-from-home if possible. The law prescribes special work schedules for those undergoing treatment. Please consult your employer.

COMMON SIDE EFFECTS OF CHEMOTHERAPY

Side effects of chemotherapy depend on

the drugs administered and how it acts on the body. Here are some simple tips to overcome the problems.

Nausea and Vomiting

- Suck on flavoured candies like orange, ginger etc. to reduce the nausea.
- Avoid food that's too spicy, oily and fried
- Eating slowly and chewing well to help easier digestion.
- Have meals only when you feel like eating.
- Drink clear, cool and unsweetened drinks like apple juice
- Do not do anything strenuous after having food.
- Do not lie down for at least two hours after having meals.
- Take deep breaths through the mouth if you feel sick.
- Relaxation and meditation can help.
- Wear loose cloths
- If you require Antimetics (anti vomiting) medicines, do inform the nurse/doctor if you need any.

Loss of appetite

- Try eating small meals/ snacks every 2-3 hours instead of heavy meals.
- Eat calorie and protein rich food
- Avoid foods that cause gas - e.g. potato, cabbage
- Make food look attractive and appetizing.
- Have meals with your family/ friends, in a positive, pleasing environment.
- Try having different kinds of food.
- If you experience an odd taste in your mouth, suck on candies/ peppermint/ chewing gum to feel better.

Hair Loss:



- Management of hair loss will be according to your comfort.
- Cut your hair short if you are expecting hair loss during chemotherapy.
- If you feel the need to purchase a wig, make sure you do it before you start the treatment to ensure the best possible match.
- Use scarves/ caps to conceal hair loss and protect your scalp from harsh sunlight (your skin will be more sensitive during treatment).
- Use mild soap and shampoo.
- Remember, it will take 4-12 months for hair growth to return to normal.

Mouth ulcer:

- Chemotherapy can affect the lining of the mouth cells, leading to ulcers.
- It is important to maintain dental hygiene - keep your mouth, teeth and gums clean always.
- Use a very soft tooth brush.
- Use a mouthwash regularly (do not use commercial ones). To prepare mouthwash, mix one teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon baking soda and 4 cups water. Use this thrice a day.
- Eat soft food and drink plenty of water.
- Do not have acidic and spicy foods like grape fruit, tomato juice and oily curries.
- Use lip balm to prevent lips from