



Chemotherapy



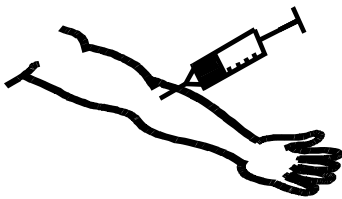
Chemotherapy



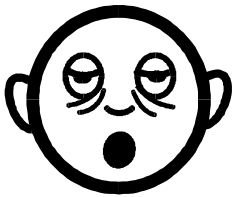
Chemotherapy is a medicine treatment for cancer.



Chemotherapy medicine is given: through a drip, as tablets or capsules.



Before you have chemotherapy you will need a blood test.



You will feel tired.



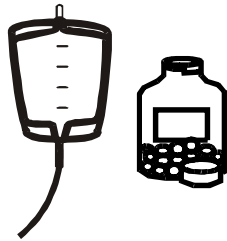
You will need to rest during the day.



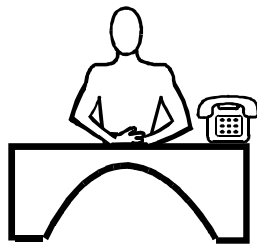
Chemotherapy Outpatients



This is oncology
outpatients



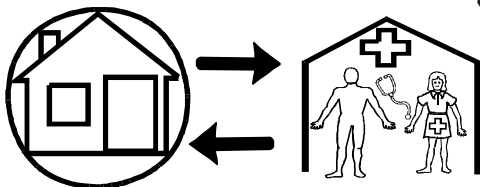
This is where people go
when they need
treatment for cancer.



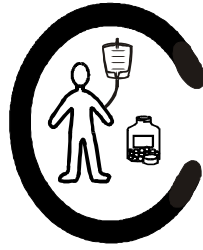
You will need to go to
chemotherapy reception.



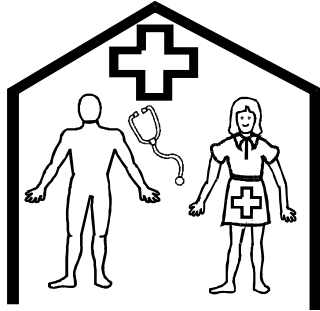
You will be asked to wait
until your name is
called out.



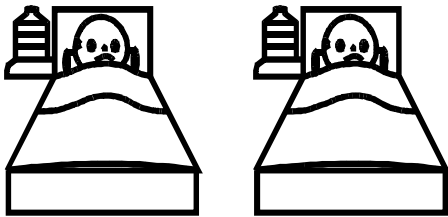
You will be able to go
home after your
appointment.



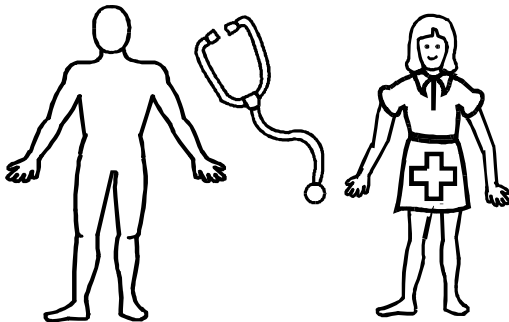
Chemotherapy Inpatients



You will need to stay in
hospital to have your
treatment.



You will stay on a
hospital ward.



You will be looked
after by doctors
and nurses.

Chemotherapy Guidance Notes for Health Professionals

What is Chemotherapy?

Chemotherapy is the use of anti cancer medicines to destroy cancer cells. The type of drug that is used will depend on the type of disease the patient has and what part of the body it started in.

How is it given?

Most chemotherapy is given through a drip straight into the bloodstream. Some chemotherapy is given as tablets or capsules. If the patient is being treated for skin cancer then a topical chemotherapy cream may be used.

Why is it given?

Chemotherapy may be given:

- To try to cure the cancer.
- To reduce the chances of a cancer coming back.
- To shrink a cancer and prolong life if a cure is not possible. (see the palliative care section in the pack)

Will the patient have any side effects?

- **Early side effects** happen within 24 hours after being given chemotherapy. They usually only last for a short time.
- **Late side effects** may happen after several weeks or days.

What will the side effects be?

(The patient may have one or a combination of the following side effects.)

Nausea and Vomiting.

- The patient may feel sick or be sick within a few hours after chemotherapy.

Diarrhoea.

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Eat less fibre, fruit and veg.

Constipation.

- Eat more fibre, fruit and veg.

Loss of appetite.

- The patient may have an odd taste in their mouth.
- If the loss of appetite is still poor after a week, their GP or Consultant can arrange for the patient to see a Dietician.

Chemotherapy Guidance Notes for Health Professionals

Painful, burning skin.

- If there is a painful or burning feeling near where the chemotherapy has been injected you should tell a doctor straight away.

Sore Mouth.

- The patient should clean their mouth and gently brush their teeth with a soft toothbrush each morning, evening and after each meal.
- If the patient has mouth ulcers they should see their GP straight away.

Hair Loss.

- Many chemotherapy drugs do not cause any hair loss.
- Some only cause a slight thinning. Others may cause partial or total loss of hair.
- The patient may lose their eyelashes eyebrows and body hair.
- Their hair will grow back after treatment.
- It may be possible for them to get a wig from the hospital.

'Cold caps'

Some patients having certain types of chemotherapy may be able to prevent hair loss by using a scalp cooling system called a cold cap. Please ask the department for more information about this.

How often will the treatment be for?

The treatment is usually given as several sessions. Each session is followed by a rest period of a few weeks. This will help the patient to recover from any side effects they may be experiencing. It may take several months to complete the course of treatment needed.

Call the GP if the patient:

- Has a temperature or a sore throat.
- Has nose bleeds, bleeding gums, bruising, black tarry stools, or any signs of unexpected bleeding.
- Feels tired and breathless and looks pale.
- Still feels sick despite the anti-sickness tablets.
- Has ulcers around the lips.
- Has had diarrhoea that has lasted more than 2 days.
- Has constipation.
- Has painful, red or swollen skin near where the chemotherapy was injected.
- Has any other health concerns.