

# PREPARING FOR CHEMOTHERAPY

## A QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

### Consent

Before you have any treatment, your doctor will explain its aims. They will usually ask you to sign a form saying that you give permission (consent) for the hospital staff to give you the treatment. Nomedical treatment can be given without your consent, and before you are asked to sign the form you should be given full information about:

- the type and extent of the treatment
- its advantages and disadvantages
- any significant risks or side effects
- any other treatments that may be available.

It's a good idea to have a relative or friend with you when the treatment is explained, to help you remember the discussion. You may also find it useful to write a list of questions before your appointment.

You are also free to choose not to have the treatment. The treating physician can explain what may happen if you don't have it. It's essential to tell a doctor or the nurse in charge, so they can record your decision in your medical notes. You don't have to give a reason for not wanting treatment, but it can help to let the doctor know your concerns so they can give you the best advice.

### Tests

Your cancer specialist will tell you if you need any tests before your chemotherapy are needed.

Before starting your treatment, your height and weight at the clinic. This information is to work out the right dose of chemotherapy for you. Some chemotherapy drugs can affect organs such as the heart or the kidneys. You may need tests to measure how well these organs are working before you have chemotherapy. For example, if you're having drugs that can affect the heart you may have an echocardiogram. Some people may need further scans or x-rays to find out more about the extent of the cancer (its stage) before chemotherapy.



### Dental Checks

You may be advised to have a dental check-up before chemotherapy. Having dental work during chemotherapy can be more complicated as you're more at risk of an infection.

However if an emergency, then dental procedures can safely be done if the CBC is normal and under appropriate Antibiotic cover.

### Blood Tests



## Things to Think About.

### *Getting a wig:*

If the chemotherapy drugs cause hair loss it's best to have a wig fitted before your hair falls out.

### *Work or further education:*

It's a good idea to talk to your employer or tutors, so they can make arrangements to support you and organise your time off during treatment.

### *Your fertility:*

Some chemotherapy drugs affect fertility (the ability to get pregnant or father a child). If this is a concern for you, it's very important to talk to your cancer doctor before treatment. Sperm or eggs that can be used to try to preserve your fertility should be stored before chemotherapy begins.

### *Help at home:*

Chemotherapy makes you tired so you may need help with day-to-day chores. Although it can be hard to ask for help, family and friends are usually keen to do whatever they can.

### *Help with children:*

If you have children you may need help with taking and picking them up from school. Family and friends can usually organise a rota of help. It's also useful to know who you can contact at short notice to look after your children.

## Chemotherapy

How often you have chemotherapy, how it's given, and how long your whole course takes depends on:

- the type of cancer you have
- the chemotherapy drugs you're having
- how the cancer responds to the drugs
- how the side effects are affecting you.

Sometimes treatment involves having chemotherapy in more than one way. For example, you may have chemotherapy into a vein (iv) and chemotherapy tablets.

Chemotherapy is usually given as several sessions of treatment followed by a rest period of a few weeks. The rest period allows your body to recover from the side effects, and the number of cells in your blood to go back to normal. Some people are given drugs a day or two before treatment to reduce the risk of an allergic reaction or sickness. This depends on the type of chemotherapy.

Chemotherapy and the rest period make up a cycle of your treatment. Your doctor will explain the number of cycles you need to treat the cancer. After your first cycle, you'll have a better idea of what you can plan for, and how much you may or may not be able to do.

The complete course of all your chemotherapy may take several months. Chemotherapy is sometimes given continuously by an infusion pump for several days or several weeks. If you're having chemotherapy as tablets or capsules, you may have them daily for several weeks or months before a rest period.

You'll have a blood test before your chemotherapy. To save time, your blood may be checked a day or two before chemotherapy. This can be done at the hospital where you're having chemotherapy, or by your GP or a hospital closer to home. The results will be ready for you when you go to have your chemotherapy.

### Contact Details:

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**DR GORE'S CLINIC**

# PREPARING FOR CHEMOTHERAPY AT THE HOSPITAL



## Instructions while on chemotherapy

1. Avoid too many visitors at home to prevent infection.
2. Consume at least 3 litres water per day.
3. Clean your hands with soap and water on regular basis especially before and after eating food.
4. Consume freshly cooked home food.
5. Consume small quantity feeds more frequently i.e every 2-3 hourly feeds.
6. Home made milk shakes, smoothies, curds, butter milk, lassi can be consumed.
7. Lemon water and Coconut water can be consumed in limited quantity.
8. Keep away from unhealthy environment or other patients.
9. Remain in well lit and healthy environments.
10. Be active and do your regular daily activities to remain fit.
11. Do not over exert yourself and avoid tiredness.
12. In case of nausea, vomiting, constipation, loose motions, pain, fever, skin rash, etc please contact your doctor immediately or refer to the emergency medicine chart and meet doctor for an emergency consultation.
13. In case of deteriorating health, severe fever, severe loose motions, breathlessness, chest pain, etc immediately rush to the casualty department of the hospital.

## What to Expect !

1. Do not come for chemotherapy on empty stomach. Follow your regular breakfast schedule.
2. Have an adequate nights' sleep for at least 7 to 8 hours on day prior to chemotherapy. If you are having difficulty as your doctor he would advise appropriate medications.
3. You may need to take some medications on the day prior to chemotherapy depending on the treatment you are to receive. Check with your doctor.
4. Wear comfortable clothing while coming for chemotherapy.
5. Please carry all your reports and files on the day of treatment.
6. Carry a book, magazine or any other reading material to read along with you.
7. You may carry meals for the day. You would be provided with meals at the hospital.
8. After you reach the hospital, a doctor and nurse will greet you, check your vitals and discuss about complaints if any.
9. After discussion with your oncologist and a final fine tuning or dose adjustment the chemotherapy nurse will proceed for preparing the chemotherapy.
10. The process for chemotherapy preparation is a specialised process and may require upto 30- 45 minutes based on the medications prescribed.
11. Before the chemotherapy, certain premedication drugs would be administered. These are meant to prevent nausea, vomiting, acidity and drug reactions.
12. Occasionally these drugs may cause slight drowsiness, dryness of mouth. Please inform the chemotherapy team immediately if you feel any uncomfortable symptoms.
13. After completion of chemotherapy, make sure you understand the instruction regarding medicines to be



# EMERGENCY MEDICATIONS CHART

Please consult Your Primary Care Physician or Oncologist before taking these medications.

Only to be used while on Chemotherapy/ Biological treatment.

In case of Emergency please report to Casualty Department of the Hospital.

## For Controlling Vomiting

Tab Stemetil MD (Prochlorperazine) 5 mg 2 – 2 – 2 to be chewed (before food)  
 Tab. Perinorm (Metoclopramide) 10 mg 1- 1 -1 (before food)  
 Tab. Olanzapine (Olanzapine) 5 mg 1 tablet at 9 PM daily for 5 days.

## For Controlling Fever

Tab Dolo (Paracetamol) 650 mg 1 tablet stat if temperature is > 99' F  
 o Do CBC (Complete Blood Count) and inform your doctor Immediately.  
 Tab Ciplox (Ciprofloxacin) 500 mg 1 - 0 - 1 x 5 days  
 If persistent fever (for > 24 hours despite taking medications), bring the CBC report and consult doctor in person immediately.

## For controlling loose motions (if more than 4-5 times/day)

Oral rehydration solution (ORS) and Plenty of oral liquids to continue.  
 o Electral powder (1 sachet dissolved in 1 liter of water OR Gatorade Energy Drink.  
 Cap. Reeditil/ Enuff/ Rokko (100 mg) 1 cap stat & continue thrice daily till loose motions stop.  
 If loose motions continue, then start with Antibiotics after consulting the doctor.  
 Tab. Ciplox TZ (Ciprofloxacin + Tinidazole) 1 – 0 – 1 for 5 days  
 If Urine passed is less– inform the doctor immediately; You may require IV Fluids/ Admission to Hospital.

## For relieving Constipation

Tab Cremalax 10 mg 2 tablets at bed time.  
 Syp Cremaffin plus / Syr. Smuth / Syr. Duphalac 15 ml at bed time.  
 Plenty of oral fluids&High Fiber diet.  
 If constipation is not relieved, an Enema may be required after consulting the doctor

## For Pain relief

Tab Calpol T (Paracetamol + Tramadol) 1 – 0 – 1  
 Tab Naprosyn 250 mg 1 – 0 – 1  
 Tab Dolo (Paracetamol) 650 mg PO 1 - 1 - 1.

## For controlling Hiccups

Plenty of Oral liquids; Adequate Salt intake is essential.  
 Syr. Mucaine Gel 10 ml thrice a day.  
 Tab Lioresal (Baclofen) 10 mg 1 tablet three times daily (till hiccups subside)

## For Treatment of Oral Ulcers/ Stomatitis/ Glossitis

Tab. Zocon DT (Fluconazole) 100 mg 1 tablet twice daily for 5 days.  
 Mucobenz / Colgate Plax Green Tea (Alcohol Free) gargles thrice daily (after meals).  
 Clogen / Clenothrush (Clotrimazole) Lozenges three times daily (to be sucked and chewed)  
 Dologel CT for Oral application thrice daily before food. (Pain relief)  
 Mucaine Gel liquid 10 ml hold in mouth for 2-3 min, then to swallow; before food (Pain relief)

## For Dry Skin

Moisturizer application on skin - Liberally thrice daily. (Vaseline Lotion/ Nivea Soft / Cocoa Butter cream).  
 1% Clindamycin Ointment for local application on Pimple like rash/ Folliculitis only.

## For Thrombophlebitis(Meet doctor immediately if pain increases or blisters develop)

Ice pack application for 15 - 20 minutes three times daily (on affected site).  
 Thrombophobe Ointment for local application three times daily.  
 Glycerine + Mag Sulphate powder- Cold compress three times daily.

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