Chemotherapy
What to expect



مؤسسة حمد الطبية
Hamad Medical Corporation
HEALTH • EDUCATION • RESEARCH
صحة • تعليم • بحوث

Class Outline

1. Preparing for your treatment

2. Day of chemotherapy

3. What is cancer?

4. What is chemotherapy?

5. What are the side effects?

7. Use of natural health products

8. Safety precautions

9. Resources available

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11. Healthy diet during chemotherapy and radiotherapy treatment for cancer

Preparing for your treatment

How do I prepare for my appointment?

Clothes:
Wear comfortable clothing (sleeves that roll up)

Food:
Have some light breakfast before you arrive. The Chemo Day Care Unit will also offer some light snacks while you are receiving treatment.

What to bring to hospital:
- A valid health card
- Appointment sheet
- Your Patient Record book

Transportation and Parking

Transportation:
Arrange a ride to and from your appointment. You may not feel well enough to drive after your treatment.

Parking:
Parking is available in the National Center for Cancer Care and Research, please show your appointment card to the parking security.

How long will I stay in the hospital?

The time you spend in the hospital may vary due to different treatment plans. Bring a book or tablet to pass the time. You may also choose to bring one adult with you.

Blood work

One to two days before the appointment, make sure to have your blood work done in the Outpatient Department Lab (main floor, NCCCR).

Appointments

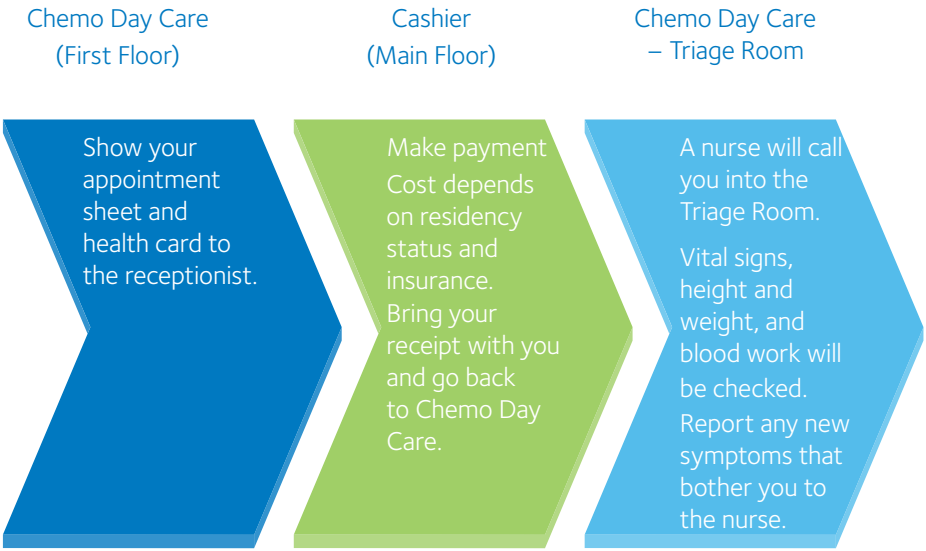
You may receive an SMS and a call from our call center for confirmation of your appointment.

The Day Care Unit will call you for reconfirmation and reminder.

If you cannot attend your chemotherapy appointment as scheduled, call the Day Care Unit booking desk 4439 7890

Please update your telephone number in the system when you visit the hospital. It is very important to have the right telephone number so we can reach you.

What happens on the day of your chemotherapy treatment?



Chemo Day Care (First Floor)

- Nurse will assign you to a designated bed or chair.
- You may wait some time for your treatment to start. This is because medication is customized for you and the preparation takes time.
- Treatment starts when medication arrives.

Outpatient Pharmacy (Main Floor)

- Go to the pharmacy to pick up medications.
- There is no written prescription. It is already entered in the electronic health system.

What is cancer?

- Uncontrolled cell division.
- Formation of a lump (tumor) in different parts of the body.
- Large numbers of abnormal white cells in the blood as seen in leukemia.
- Ability to move within the body and grow in other parts.

What is chemotherapy?

- Medications that destroy cancer cells .
- Also known as “chemo”.
- One or more chemo drugs may be used to treat a cancer.

Why do we give chemotherapy?

- Get rid of the cancer.
- Make the tumor smaller.
- Prevent cancer from spreading.
- Relieve symptoms from cancer, such as pain.
- Prevent cancer from coming back.

How is chemotherapy given?

Intravenous | Oral (by mouth) | Other route



Is chemotherapy painful?

NO

- If you feel burning or notice redness in the needle site, call your nurse immediately .
- If you feel pain or notice redness or swelling at the injection site after you return home, please go to urgent care.

Chemotherapy side effects?

- There are possible side effects for each chemotherapy.
- You will NOT experience ALL side effects.
- Some side effects can be prevented.

What are the possible side effects?

- Low immunity (bone marrow suppression).
- Nausea and vomiting.
- Diarrhea.
- Constipation.
- Hair loss.
- Fatigue.
- Mouth sores.
- Reproductive/hormonal changes.
- Sensory changes.
- Thinking, memory and attention changes.

If you experience any of these side effects – please contact Urgent Care 4439-7277

What are the signs of infection?

- Fever.
- Flu like symptoms e.g. body aches.
- Feeling warm, chilled or shaky.
- Sore throat and/or mouth.
- Productive cough and/or shortness of breath.
- Burning when urinating/urinating more often.
- Areas of redness or tenderness.
- Loose or liquid stools.

If your temperature is 38°C or more (or 100.4°F or more)...

How can I prevent an infection?

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water
- Avoid people with infections
- Check with your oncologist before having any invasive procedures (e.g. dental or surgical procedure)
- Avoid skin cuts

Use of natural health products

Natural Health Products (NHPs): Are they safe during cancer treatment?

- They are NOT recommended during chemotherapy (radiation and surgical treatments)
- Please inform your oncologist about the use of NHPs
- A Clinical Pharmacist is available to counsel and answer questions

Safety precautions

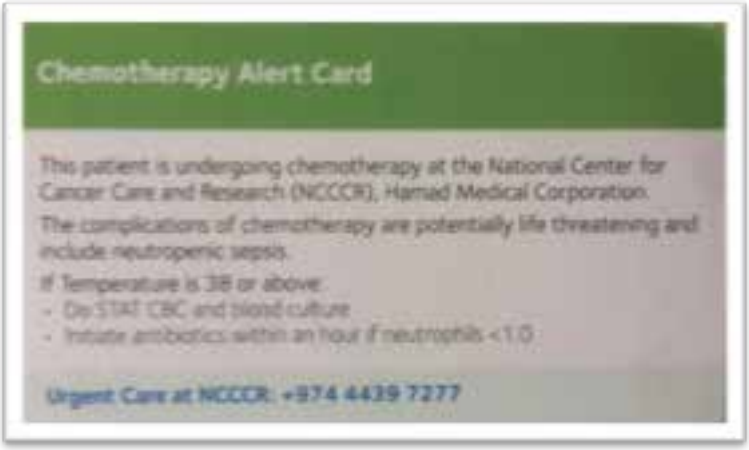
- Keep chemotherapy out of reach of children
- It takes approximately 48 hours for your body to filter the chemo out
- During that time, your body fluids (urine, stool, vomit, vaginal fluids or semen) carry small amounts of drug waste
- Exposure to this drug waste can irritate your skin and be harmful to others
- Flush the toilet twice
- (lid down to prevent splashing)
- If chemotherapy or body wastes splash on your skin, wash the area with soap and water
- Wash your clothes separately from other clothes
- Use a condom during intercourse
- Pregnancy and breast feeding should be avoided

When to contact Urgent Care

- Fevers (≥ 38°C) or higher with chills or cold feeling
- Mouth sores, mouth pain
- Uncontrolled nausea or vomiting (six or more times in 24 hours)
- Uncontrolled diarrhea (six or more times in 24 hours)
- Severe constipation (for 72 hours)
- Abnormal bleeding or bruising
- Unrelieved shortness of breath
- Painful or soreness at IV site (or swollen legs)
- Any new rashes or lumps
- Any unusual strong or new pain
- Unable to eat or drink

Chemotherapy Alert Card

- You will receive one from the Chemo Day Care Unit
- Keep this card with you at all times, especially when you are seeking medical treatment outside of NCCCR



Contact information

Patient Information Center:
- Sunday to Thursday, 7am to 3pm
- 4439 7530

Urgent Care Clinic:
- Open 24 hours
- 4439 7277

Chemotherapy Day Care Unit:
- Sunday to Thursday, 7am to 3pm
- 4439 7890

Living with cancer

Support services available in NCCCR
- Patient Information Center
- Pharmacy
- Dietary
- Social Work
- Physiotherapy/Lymphedema therapy
- Psychotherapy
- Advanced Clinical Nurse Specialist
- Prosthesis for breast cancer

Healthy diet during chemotherapy and radiotherapy treatment for cancer

Content

Introduction

Eating before treatment

Eating advice during and after treatment

Treatment-related side effects and dietary advice for:

Nausea and vomiting

Constipation

Diarrhea

Poor appetite and weight loss

Taste change

Gaining weight

Introduction

Nutrition is an important part of your cancer treatment.
Eating the right kinds of foods before, during, and after treatment can help you feel better and stay stronger.

Healthy eating

Healthy eating means eating a variety of foods to give the body the right amount of nutrients and maintain health.
Protein to heal, carbohydrate and fat as sources of energy.
Fruits and vegetable for vitamins, minerals and other nutrients.

Eating advice during and after treatment

- Drink plenty of fluid (eight to 12 cups).
- Eat when you have the biggest appetite.
- Try to eat a bigger meal early in the day and drink fluids in between.
- Fat should be limited. Try to cut down on saturated fat.
- Maintain healthy weight.
- It is important not to go on a diet during treatment. You should focus on maintaining a healthy weight.
- When you do not feel like eating, try to eat foods that you can eat, even if it is only one or two items.
- Continue with these foods until you are able to eat more.
- If you cannot eat for several days, ask to see a dietitian.
- Make sure to include items which can be eaten even when you feel sick.
- Cook some foods ahead of time and freeze in meal sized portions.

Starting treatment

Cancer treatments, such as chemotherapy or radiotherapy can have a range of side effects, some of which may affect food intake and drinking.

Treatment-Related Side Effects

Nausea and vomiting

- Eat several small meals throughout the day rather than three big meals.
- Try eating a light meal a few hours before treatment.
- Drink plenty of fluids in small amounts throughout the day.
- Avoid unpleasant odors, as they can trigger nausea.
- Rest after eating, but don't lie flat.

Constipation

- Drink eight to 10 cups of clear liquid a day (water, prune juice (½ cup and warm liquid soup,).
- Slowly add high-fiber foods to your diet (e.g. whole-grain breads and cereals, fruits and vegetables with skins/peels, nuts, dried beans, peas, raisins, dates and prunes). Always increase fluid when increasing fiber.
- Avoid eating large amounts of cheese, cheese products or bananas (which can be constipating).
- Eat at breakfast a hot drink and foods high in insoluble fiber (e.g. bran cereals).

Diarrhea

- Drink plenty of clear fluids (eight to 10 glasses per day).
- Eat small amounts of soft bland low fiber foods (banana, rice, noodles, white bread, chicken, turkey or mild white fish).
- Avoid foods such as:
- Greasy, fatty, or fried foods.
- Raw vegetables or fruits.
- Strong spices.
- Whole grains breads and cereals, nuts, and popcorn.
- Gas forming foods and beverages (beans, cabbage, carbonated beverages).
- Lactose-containing products, supplements, or alcohol.
- Limit foods and beverages with caffeine and beverages extremely hot or cold.

Poor appetite and weight loss

- Eat high-calorie, soft foods that contain carbohydrate, protein, vegetable and fruits.
- Drink high-calorie beverages: juices, milk, malted milk, cocoa, shakes, smoothies, breakfast drinks and nutritional supplement beverages (if needed).
- Plan meals that include favorite foods use of seasonings and lemon.

Taste change

- Frequently rinse mouth with medium cool water, mint-flavored water or a mild solution of baking soda and water.
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- To help improve the taste of the food, use spices/flavorings, such as ginger, salt, cinnamon, soy sauce.
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- Chewing sugar-free gum or eating candies and mints can help control the metallic or bitter taste and help relieve mouth dryness.

Gaining weight

- Try small portion sizes.
- Eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day.
- Choose wholegrain varieties of bread, pasta and cereals.
- Use lower-fat dairy foods, such as skimmed or semi-skimmed milk .
- Go for lean meat beans and reduced red meat.
- Keep biscuits, cakes, chocolate and crisps for occasional treats.
- Take care when eating out (can be high in fat and calories).

Food safety guidelines

- Clean — Wash hands and surfaces often.
- Separate — Don't cross-contaminate.
- Cook — Cook to the right temperature.
- Chill — Refrigerate promptly.

Remember

To be healthy we need:

- A healthy diet
- Regular exercise
- Minimizing alcohol intake
- Refraining from smoking

For more information

Websites

- www.eatright.org
- www.cancer.org
- www.breastcancer.org/tips/nutrition



Patient and Family Education

patienteducation@hamad.qa

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