

What to Expect

A Guide to Outpatient Cancer Infusion Therapy at the Victory Hematology and Oncology

**This book is available online at
www.victoryoncology.com**



A Guide to Chemotherapy

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8 Must Know Facts:

These are the facts that are most important for your infusion preparation. These and other helpful information can be found in this booklet.

1. Plan to spend most of the day in the center for your first visit.
2. You must have a driver for your first chemotherapy visit.
3. Only one adult visitor is allowed with you in the infusion area.
4. No children are allowed in the area.
5. Eat lightly.....Do not skip meals prior to your infusion.
6. See a dentist before you begin chemotherapy.
7. Try a stress reducing activity before chemotherapy, plan to continue this activity throughout your cancer treatment.
8. Be safe...wear sensible shoes and loose, comfortable clothing.

Staff of Victory Oncology provided information for this handbook: Medical Assistant, Medical Oncologist, oncology nurses, and the patient and family support services program

Welcome

This guide provides answers to many common questions about chemotherapy treatment; offering ideas to prepare for treatment and describing what it will be like. It also contains suggestions to help you care for yourself during treatment.

Our goal at the Victory Hematology and Oncology is to provide our patients and families with the highest quality care. This includes administering the necessary treatments as well as providing the education and support needed throughout these treatments.

This booklet should be used in combination with the A Guide to Chemotherapy booklet produced by the America Cancer Society. This booklet is your main resource for information about chemotherapy, managing its side effects and understanding how to prevent them. It is very important to use this book as a resource throughout your chemotherapy treatment course. Copies of this booklet and other educational materials can be found at the Consultation Room and Infusion Center.

Your health care team will also provide you with verbal and written instructions about your chemotherapy treatment. You should refer to these materials for information about your specific treatment plan.



What is Chemotherapy?

Chemotherapy (chemo) is the treatment of cancer with drugs that can destroy cancer cells. These drugs often are called "anticancer" drugs. Most people don't know that cancer chemotherapy includes a variety of drugs that are given in a variety of ways such as:

- Drugs that are given into the bloodstream through an IV (called 'intravenous' chemotherapy). These drugs can be given over minutes or hours called an **infusion**.
- Drugs are also given slowly and continuously over several days using a pump. This is called a **continuous infusion**.
- Drugs that are taken by mouth as pills or liquids (called **oral chemotherapy**)
- Drugs that are placed directly into a body area (called **intracavitary chemotherapy**)
- Drugs that are placed on the skin as creams

This booklet will focus on all cancer infusion treatments (including continuous infusion treatments) at the Victory Hematology and Oncology. Information regarding the other types of chemotherapy treatment will be given to you by your health care team.

This is a good place to stop and review the section called "Questions and Answers About Chemotherapy" in Chemotherapy and You (page 1).

About Clinical Trials

Your doctor may suggest that you consider participating in a clinical trial (also called a research study or protocol), will refer you to other institution if needed.

Clinical trials are used to test and develop new treatments. The goal of these trials is to find ways to improve treatment. While a trial or study is active or in progress we will not know whether any potential benefit has been found. The trial must be closed and the data analyzed before the treatment is made widely available to patients. Doctor will refer you to different institution based on the availability of the clinical trials if needed

There may be some additional risks associated with research. Your doctor will discuss in detail with you both the potential risks and benefits of joining the trial. Your written permission will be given before you can start on a clinical trial.

Oversight committees at institutions for the clinical trials conduct an extensive review of all clinical trials. These committees include an Institutional Review Board or IRB composed of other cancer doctors, doctors in other specialties and lay people. The IRB reviews all clinical trials before they are available to patients and again at different times during the research. This ensures that the clinical trial remains safe for patients.

All patients who are on a clinical trial receive the best supportive care possible. Their reactions to the treatment are watched closely. A doctor can stop the treatment if it does not seem to be working. The patient may choose to leave the study at any time. If a patient leaves a study for any reason, standard care will be started.

Clinical trials are voluntary. Your cancer will be treated whether you decide to join a trial or not. Talk to your doctor about any questions you have regarding clinical trials at the institutions that conduct the clinical trials

Preparing for Chemotherapy

Getting ready for chemotherapy can be scary. Patients often experience many different feelings. We offer these 4 ways to best prepare you for chemotherapy treatment. You will chemotherapy education from physician prior to treatment. The physician will review your chemotherapy education and is available to answer questions you may have before treatment. An appointment can be made at no charge Monday through Friday from 8am to 5pm by calling (818) 616-3998.

4 ways to prepare for chemotherapy:

#1 Learn about chemotherapy

To understand what chemotherapy is, how it is administered and what side effects may occur during or after your treatment, read the booklet Chemotherapy and You before your treatment begins. This booklet provides information that will be used before, during and after treatment. As you review this material, write down your questions in the area at the end of this booklet. Bring this booklet with your questions to your clinic appointment and discuss them with a member of your treatment team.

It is helpful to look at the chemotherapy educational material given to you before you receive your first treatment. This includes chemotherapy consent, drug information sheets, nutrition information and more! This can be a lot to review, so it might be helpful to choose an information gatherer. This is someone who will read the information and let you know what you need to know, when you need to know it.

#2 Develop a flexible plan

Chemotherapy is given in separate “sessions” over one or more days. These sessions are grouped together and called a “cycle”. Each grouping or “cycle” of chemotherapy is repeated several times with a gap of time in-between. The time between cycles of chemotherapy is usually two to three weeks, but will vary according to the type of chemotherapy.

Your doctor will review the usual schedule for your chemotherapy. However, chemotherapy schedules change **often** during a cycle for a number of reasons. Thus, you will need to be flexible about your schedule in advance. Make room for treatment delays, changes in start/stop date, etc.

#3 Schedule a pretreatment dental checkup if timing allows

The mouth can be a source of infection during some types of chemotherapy treatment. For this reason, it is helpful to have a checkup before you begin treatment if you have not had one in the last 6 months. If a dental check-up is not possible before your treatment begins, discuss this with your cancer doctor.

This is a good time to review the mouth care section in the Chemotherapy and You booklet. You can find it on pages 35-37. Follow the instructions for mouth rinses that are described in this section.

#4 Take care of YOU

Treatment can be a stressful time for you and for those around you. It is important that you focus on your needs during this time. The following is a list of suggestions to help you:

✓ Ask for Help

Select someone close to you to help organize help for the chores and activities you would normally do. Learning to accept help from others can be difficult, but may be necessary. If you can learn to let others

help...they'll be happy doing it, and you'll be happy to have things done!

✓ **Reduce Stress**

Identify one or two ways to reduce stress and relax. Practice them before your treatment begins. Plan to use these techniques on the day of treatment.

✓ **Be Comfortable**

Plan to be comfortable during your infusion chemotherapy appointment. Most patients like to wear loose, comfortable clothing. Also, you may need to roll-up your sleeves. Wear clothing that allows you to do this.

Techniques for Stress Reduction

These are a few suggested activities. Every patient is different and will find help in different ways. If an activity doesn't help, try another.

- Deep Breathing Exercises
- Biofeedback
- Guided Imagery
- Distraction: Music, Art, Hobbies
- Journaling

[Contact weSPARK Cancer Support Center for additional information and help:](#)
www.wesparks.com; Phone: 818-906-3022
[13520 Ventura Boulevard](#)
[Sherman Oaks, California 91423](#)

✓ **Dress for Safety**

Patients receiving infusion chemotherapy may experience sedation or other symptoms that place them at risk for falling. We are committed to keeping you safe in the chemotherapy infusion areas. Please help us by wearing sensible, stable shoes like athletic shoes or slip-resistant socks.

**Have a thermometer
in your house....
and be able to read it
easily.**



✓ **Gather Supplies**

Stock up on items you may need after treatment such as dressing supplies, medications, food and beverages. All patients should also have a thermometer in their house and be able to read it.