

# New Patient Treatment Guide





# My Clinic Information

Physician Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Office phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

## WHEN TO CALL THE OFFICE

Please do not hesitate to call the office if you have questions, concerns, or if you are experiencing any of the symptoms discussed in this guide. If you call after business hours, we have a call service that will take a message and contact the physician on call. Our physicians will return calls after hours for emergency problems, such as fever, uncontrolled pain, or new onset symptoms that are severe.

### Contact the office for any of the following:

- Fever of 100.4° or above
- Excessive bruising
- Nausea and vomiting lasting more than 24 hours
- Diarrhea lasting more than 24 hours
- Severe/sudden onset of new pain

*Call 9-1-1 or go the Emergency Room immediately if you are experiencing any chest pain, new or worsening shortness of breath, bleeding that will not stop, or changes in mental status.*

*Please be aware this booklet is for general knowledge only. It does not replace talking with your healthcare team. If you have any questions about your treatment or side effects, please call your care team.*

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## About this guide

**T**his is your guide to treatment. In it, you will find information on common side effects and how to manage them. You will also find information on what symptoms or side effects to look for and when to call your physician if there are problems. If you have any questions after reading this information, please talk with your healthcare team.

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## Preparing for Your First Day of Treatment

Ask your physician about whether you need to address any of these things prior to starting treatment:

- Do you need to see a dentist?
- Do you need to get a hearing or vision test?
- Does your treatment require that you see a heart doctor?
- Will you need a port or PICC line for treatment?
- Do you need to see a fertility doctor about fertility planning? This should be discussed if you want to have children after treatment is complete.
- Should you get vaccines for flu, COVID-19, pneumonia, chicken pox/shingles, etc.?

Be sure to write down any questions you have so you can talk to your healthcare team to get the answers you need.

## Quick Tips During Treatment

- Listen to your body – Make sure you are talking to your healthcare team about any changes so we can help you throughout your treatment. You can find information on side effects and nutrition later in this booklet.
- Stay connected and let family, friends, church groups, or others help you with transportation, housework, yard work or preparing meals. Keep them close as you may need some assistance before treatment is complete, even if you feel great in the beginning.
- Stay on schedule – You will be given a schedule for your treatments when you arrive for your first visit. Please keep your appointments, even if you are not feeling well. If you miss an appointment, please make sure that it is rescheduled as soon as possible. Lab work will be done before your treatment and, if it is acceptable, you will proceed with your treatment as planned.

- Drink plenty of fluids – It is very important that you stay hydrated during treatment. The extra fluids will help rid your body of the toxins that are released as a result of your treatment. The more water you drink, the better you will feel between cycles. You should be drinking at least two liters of fluid per day, unless otherwise directed by your healthcare team.
- Stay active, but pace yourself – Light exercise will keep your spirits up and help with your sleep patterns; however, it is also important to listen to your body and rest when necessary. You can find more information on activity during treatment later in this booklet.
- Take care of yourself first – Do the things you need before you do anything for others. Again, let others help you when possible.

## Prescriptions

We will make sure you have any prescriptions you will need at home before you come on your first treatment day. Please let us know what pharmacy you will be using so we can send prescriptions electronically for you. Your health care team will discuss the prescriptions with you and review how/when to take them.

There may be other medications that are sent for you to start with or before treatment. Your healthcare team will go over all prescriptions with you. Please make sure you understand how to take all of your medications.

*Prescription refills – Please call the office two to three days in advance for refills, especially for narcotics (pain medications) or other controlled substances.*

## Can I take over-the-counter and prescription medication during treatment?

It is best to bring a list of all the prescription medications and supplements you take, including laxatives, allergy medications, cold medicines, pain relievers, ibuprofen, or aspirin, to every appointment. Some prescription and over-the-counter drugs can affect the way oncology treatment medications work in your body and you may need to stop taking them. We will need to know the name of each medication, why and how

often you take it, and the dosage.

We also need to know about any herbs, minerals, vitamins or essential oils. Please do not start taking anything new without discussing it with your healthcare team.

#### Notes on my prescriptions:

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### What is Cancer?

Normal/healthy cells divide as the body needs them. They stop dividing when required and die at the end of their life cycle.

Cancer cells do not behave in this way. They often continue to divide and crowd out the normal cells of the body and they do not die. This is how tumors grow.

- Most cancers are named for the area of the body where they begin.
- When cancer spreads to other areas of the body it is called metastasis.
- Treatment depends on the type of cancer and the stage of the disease.
- There are four stages of cancer. Stage I (one) cancer typically means the cancer is small and localized to one area and that it has not spread to the lymph nodes or other parts of the body. Stage II (two) cancer means the cancer is still local but is larger and may have spread to lymph nodes in the area. Stage III (three) cancer indicates that the cancer has moved into nearby tissue and has invaded lymph nodes. Stage IV (four) cancer is when the cancer has spread to other distant areas of the body; Stage IV is often called metastatic disease.

### How is cancer treated?

- Local therapy - removes or destroys cancer in just one part of the body
- Surgery - you may see a surgeon before or after chemotherapy, depending on the plan of care
- Radiation therapy – you may see a radiation

oncologist for radiation treatments before, during, or after chemotherapy

- Systemic therapy – destroys cancer cells throughout the body, not just one area
- Chemotherapy – information in next section
- Hormone therapy – some patients may be treated with hormone therapy. This type of therapy is only effective if your cancer cells are hormone receptor positive. Your physician will discuss this with you if this is something that you will need.
- Immunotherapy/targeted therapy (page 5)
- Biosimilars (page 6)

### Questions and Answers About Chemotherapy

#### What is Chemotherapy?

Chemotherapy (also called chemo) is a type of cancer treatment that uses drugs to destroy cancer cells.

#### How does chemo work?

Chemo works by interrupting the growth of cancer cells, which grow and divide quickly. These medications can also affect the healthy cells of your body that reproduce the fastest, such as those that line your mouth and intestines or cause your hair to grow. Damage to healthy cells may cause side effects because they do not know the difference between healthy cells and cancer cells. Often, side effects get better or go away after chemotherapy is completed.

#### What is the goal of chemo?

Depending on the type of cancer you have and how advanced it is, there are different goals for chemo treatment:

- Cure – if cure is the goal of treatment, this means that the cancer cells will be killed to the point of being undetectable.
- Control – a goal of control means that the treatment is expected to prevent the cancer from growing or spreading to other areas of the body.
- Palliative – this type of treatment helps to protect and preserve or even regain (in some cases) your quality of life.



## How is chemo used?

Chemo can be used alone or with other treatments, such as surgery, radiation therapy, or immunotherapy. It is given at different intervals or "cycles" depending on the goal of the treatment, the type of chemo, or the type of cancer.

- It can be used to help shrink the size of a tumor before surgery or radiation
- It can be used after surgery or radiation to kill cancer cells that may remain in your body
- Sometimes chemo is used at the same time with radiation or immunotherapy to make the treatment more effective
- Additional treatment with chemo may be needed if cancer returns or has spread to other parts of the body (metastatic cancer)

## How does my oncologist decide what chemo drugs to use?

There are many different types of chemotherapy medications. They can be used alone or combined. Some are used for many types of cancer and others may only be used for one or two types. The decision is made depending on several things:

- The type of cancer that is being treated
- The national guideline recommendations
- The general health of the patient and any health problems or medications that need to be considered
- Any previous chemotherapy

## How often will I need to have chemo?

Treatment varies for every patient. Some patients are treated weekly and others receive treatment every two, three, or four weeks. Your schedule will depend on what type of cancer you have, what the goal of treatment is, and how your body reacts to treatment.

Chemo is ordered in cycles. A cycle of treatment is a period of chemo followed by a period of rest. The treatment and rest period is considered one cycle. The rest period gives your body time to recuperate and allow your healthy cells to rebuild.

## Can I miss a cycle of chemo?

It is not a good idea to miss a treatment; however, sometimes your doctor will adjust your treatment schedule based on how you are feeling and the side effects of treatment. If this happens, your care team will discuss this with you and explain the change. They will also review when they plan to move forward with the next treatment cycle.

## How is chemo given?

Chemo can be given in several ways

- Intravenous – given directly into a vein
- Injection – a shot into a muscle or the fatty tissue just under the skin
- Orally – many chemo drugs come in a pill form that can be taken at home. While this can be more convenient than other forms, it is very important that you stay on schedule if this is how you will be receiving chemo. Make sure that you understand exactly how and when to take any oral medications
- Topically – some chemo drugs come in a cream that you apply to the skin
- Intraperitoneal – this chemo goes directly into the peritoneal cavity (the area that holds organs, such as your stomach and liver, in your abdomen)
- Intra-arterial – a form of chemo that is injected directly into the artery that delivers blood to the cancer
- Intrathecal – some chemotherapy drugs can be injected directly into the cerebrospinal fluid to kill cancer cells

Intravenous chemo is the most common way to get treatment. It can be given through an IV in your arm or a port-a-cath (port) placed into your chest by a surgeon. A surgeon will give you instructions for post-op care of the port incision. On treatment days, nurses access the port with a special needle and can give medication through it that cannot be given through a regular IV. Blood can also be drawn from the port on treatment days.

When treatment is completed, the needle will be removed and covered with a Band Aid. Please do not leave the Band Aid on for longer than a few hours.

Occasionally, a Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC) is placed in the upper arm and can be used for many weeks in a row for treatment.

Ports and PICCs can be a source of infection. Please keep the area clean and dry and follow all instructions from your surgeon and nurse after placement.

Sometimes chemo is put into a pump for home use. If your treatment requires this, your care team will go over what to expect and how to proceed.

## How will I feel during chemo?

Chemo affects people differently based on many variables, including the type of chemotherapy, genetics, your overall health, how well you maintain nutrition and hydration, and the amount of rest you get. Side effects usually appear about 24-48 hours after treatment; however, they can start right after chemo.

The most common side effect is fatigue. We encourage every patient to have a caregiver to drive you to and from treatment, especially for the first treatment. Make sure you make time to rest and use the help that is offered by friends and family.

## Will I be able to work during chemo?

Many people can continue to work during treatment, depending on the type of work they do. Talk with your healthcare team about whether you will be able to work.

## How will I know if the chemo is working?

Your provider will see you regularly to assess your progress. He/she will also examine you, order blood tests, and may order imaging scans.

## How much does chemo cost?

It is very hard to say exactly how much chemo costs. There are many factors that can affect costs, such as:

- What type of chemo you are receiving
- How often and for how long you will get treatment
- At what facility you will be receiving treatment (clinic or hospital)
- Insurance benefits

If you need to speak with someone about the cost of your treatment, please ask to speak with a patient financial navigator.

## What are clinical trials and how can I participate?

Clinical trials for cancer treatments are used to help find better ways to fight cancer. These may also be called research trials. Sometimes a trial is testing a new chemo medication or a new combination of medications. Talk to your healthcare team to see if a clinical trial may be an option for you.

## Immunotherapy or Targeted Therapy

The body's immune system is a complicated system designed to seek out foreign cells and destroy them such as when we get a cold or the flu. However, the body may not recognize cancer cells as foreign because cancer cells are most often developed from our healthy cells and may not look different enough for the immune system to recognize that these cells are imposters and should be destroyed.

Immunotherapy, sometimes known as targeted therapy, are types of medications that can be used to boost the immune system to better fight cancer. This type of therapy can help the immune system recognize, target, and attack specific cancer cells while overlooking the normal healthy cells of the body. This can mean less side effects than traditional chemotherapy.

While immunotherapy treatments are not yet available to treat every type of cancer, there is progress being made daily in the discovery of new treatments. Immunotherapy will not be available or effective for every patient because each patient's cancer is unique and what works for one patient may not work for another.

## Types of immunotherapy include:

- **Monoclonal antibodies** act like human antibodies in the immune system. They can be used to target a very specific part of the cancer cell.
- **Checkpoint inhibitors** work on the surface of cancer cells allowing the immune system to attack and kill the cancer cells.
- **CAR-T therapy** uses the patient's own T-cells in the blood to fight cancer. They are able to latch on to the patient's tumor cells and kill them.
- **Cytokines** are small proteins that help carry messages between cells in the immune system. They also send signals that can help make abnormal cells die and normal cells live longer.
- **Oncolytic viruses** are a type of virus that infects and breaks down cancer cells but not normal cells. They can occur naturally or be created in a lab.
- **Cancer vaccines** are used to stimulate the immune system's response by introducing the virus in order to build immunity or fight against a specific type of cancer. They can be given to prevent the cancer or as treatment.



Immunotherapy can be used alone or with other therapies in order to develop the most effective treatment for each patient. They are administered through an IV or a port, the same way as chemotherapy.

The side effects of immunotherapy can affect your entire body and may appear shortly after beginning treatment, within the first couple of months, or even after you finish treatment. Many of immunotherapy-related side effects are treatable with steroids or other medications. Rare, but serious, side effects can lead to death, especially if left untreated, so it is important that you notify your care team if you develop any symptoms. Once you have started immunotherapy, you will also need to tell all other providers treating you for other conditions that you have had immunotherapy treatment for cancer, even after you have completed treatment.

### Immunotherapy-Specific Side Effects

**Skin** – rashes, redness, itching, skin changes, pain, swelling, soreness, dry, peeling skin, blisters or sores.

**Gastrointestinal** – nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, abdominal cramping or pain, fever, fatigue, diarrhea, constipation, increase in number of stools, or blood or mucus in the stool.

**Lung** – cough, shortness of breath or chest pain.

**Liver** – fever, chills, muscle or joint aches, headaches, drowsiness, fatigue, sweating, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain (especially on the upper right side), loss of appetite, bruising or bleeding more easily, yellowing skin or eyes, pale stools or dark urine, or confusion.

**Endocrine** – fatigue, headache, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, constipation, weight gain or loss, dizziness, confusion, drowsiness, fainting, vision changes or loss of sexual function

## Hormone Therapy

### What Is Hormone Therapy?

Hormone therapy is a type of cancer treatment used for tumors that depend on hormones to grow. Some cancer cells use hormones, such as estrogen or testosterone, as fuel. Hormone therapy works by lowering hormone levels in the body or blocking hormones from reaching cancer cells. Hormone therapy is different from chemotherapy. While chemotherapy works on fast growing cells, hormone therapy focuses on blocking hormone signals that help cancer grow.

### Why Hormone Therapy Is Used

Hormone therapy can be included as part of your treatment plan if your cancer is sensitive to hormones. It can help slow down or stop cancer growth. Hormone therapy may be used:

- As a main treatment
- Before or after surgery
- With other cancer treatments, such as chemotherapy

Your provider will recommend hormone therapy based on your type of cancer and treatment goals.

### How is Hormone Therapy Given?

Hormone therapy can be given in many ways, depending on the medication and your treatment plan. Some common forms include pills taken by mouth or injections. Your care team will explain which medication you will receive, how often it is given, and what to expect if hormone therapy will be part of your plan.

### Possible Side Effects

Because hormone therapy changes hormone levels in the body, side effects can occur. Not everyone experiences side effects, and most can be managed with support from your care team. Common side effects can include:

- Hot flashes or night sweats
- Fatigue or having low energy
- Mood swings
- Changes in weight
- Joint and/or muscle pain
- Decreased sex drive

Tell your provider about any side effects you experience so we can help manage them.

### Living With Hormone Therapy

Hormone therapy can take time to begin to work, and you may not notice benefits right away. Taking your medication exactly as ordered and staying on schedule is important for the treatment to work properly.

- Do not stop hormone therapy without talking to your provider.
- Keep track of side effects between visits.
- Ask questions and share concerns with your care team.

Your oncology team is here to support you throughout treatment.

## Biosimilars

Biosimilars are a group of safe and effective medications for treating many illnesses, such as chronic skin and bowel diseases (like psoriasis, irritable bowel syndrome, Crohn's disease and colitis), arthritis, kidney conditions and cancer.

Biosimilars are FDA-approved medications that are similar to, and chemically indistinguishable from, the original biologic medicines.

Biologic medicines are usually made from natural sources, using advanced science.

Same expected benefits and risks – compared with the original or reference biologics, biosimilars:

- Are made with the same types of natural sources
- Are given in the same form
- Provide the same treatment benefits
- Have the same potential side effects
- Have the same strength and dosage

Biosimilars may provide patients with more access to important treatments by offering additional options which are competitive in the healthcare market with lower costs

**Safe and effective** – The FDA ensures biosimilars are as safe and effective as the original biologic by:

- Approving biosimilars after a careful review of data, studies and tests
- Continuing to monitor safety and effectiveness
- Performing quality checks during medication production
- Reviewing patient safety reports made to FDA

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What are biological medications?

Biological medications (also called biological products) can be made of sugars, proteins, living cells, tissues or a combination of these. They are made from natural and living sources like animal and plant cells, and microorganisms, such as bacteria or yeast.

Biological medications are usually more complex than other drugs. They are often more complicated to purify, process and manufacture.

### Is it safe to take a biosimilar if I started treatment on the reference product first?

Generally, biosimilar medications can be used whether or not you have been treated first with the reference product. Always talk to your health care provider about available treatment options and potential risks and benefits.

### How will I know if I am using a biosimilar medication for my treatment?

Talk to your health care provider about the medications you are prescribed or are taking. Often, biological medications, including biosimilars, are given in a hospital or an infusion center. If you have a prescription, your doctor or pharmacist can tell you what you are prescribed and dispensed at the pharmacy.

### How are biosimilars different from generics?

Biosimilars are like generics in some ways, in that both types of medications are compared to a reference (original) product for approval. Biosimilars and generics are both versions of previously FDA approved medications and may offer more affordable treatment options.

Biosimilars and generics are approved through different abbreviated pathways that avoid duplicating certain costly clinical trials.

Both biosimilar and generics go through a rigorous review process. Once FDA-approved, these medications are just as safe and effective as the reference products to which they are compared; however, there are differences between biosimilars and generic drugs. For example, biosimilars are generally made from natural and living ingredients, and generics are often made from chemical ingredients.

In contrast to a chemical, which is created in a lab and can be generally copied, a biologic medication is made from natural and living sources and cannot be exactly copied. So, the information needed to demonstrate that a biosimilar is related to a biologic can be much more extensive than what is generally needed for a generic.

## Side Effects of Oncology Treatment

### What are side effects?

Side effects are symptoms that are caused by cancer treatments and can vary from patient to patient. Common side effects are changes in appetite and taste, constipation, diarrhea, fatigue, hair loss, low blood counts, mouth sores, and nausea or vomiting. In this section, information about potential side effects is provided, along with suggestions that may help ease the symptoms.

### How long will my side effects last?

The length of side effects will depend on your general health and the type of treatment you receive. Symptoms often appear within days after treatment and most side effects will go away after treatment is complete. Unfortunately, a few side effects may take months or years to resolve.

A small number of chemo medications can cause long-term side effects that do not go away. This can include damage to the heart, kidneys, lungs, nerves, and reproductive system. Ask your healthcare team if your treatment could potentially cause these long-term side effects.

### What can I do about my side effects?

There are many ways that your healthcare team can ease or eliminate the side effects caused by oncology treatment medications. Talk to your care team if you are experiencing any new symptoms after you start treatment, as it might be a side effect.

#### Questions for my team:

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## Chemo Brain

Chemo Brain is a term used to describe the feeling of fogginess or cloudy thinking that can happen from the medications given for cancer treatment. Patients describe it as “feeling like you are walking around with your head in a cloud.” Chemo brain may make it harder to stay focused on normal activities, remember things like names or dates, find the right words, and may cause you to take longer than usual to do things. It can happen quickly and last throughout treatment or even after treatment is completed.

#### Things to do to manage chemo brain:

- Make lists and write everything down.
- Use a planner for keeping appointments and important dates.
- Do puzzles, games or take a class to exercise your brain.
- Make sure to get enough sleep and eat well.
- Stay hydrated.
- Follow a daily routine.
- Do not try to do too many things at once. Keep multi-tasking to a minimum.
- Keep a journal of day-to-day concerns so they can be tracked.

## Constipation

Constipation is a condition that causes bowel movements to occur less often than usual, the stool to be hard or dry, or trouble passing the stool. This can be caused by several things, including pain medication, chemo treatments, anti-nausea medications, dehydration, location of the cancer, decreased activity, and not eating/drinking enough.

Constipation can also cause gas, bloating, nausea, and abdominal pain. Everyone’s bowel patterns are different, so it is important that you know what is normal for you.

#### Things to do to manage constipation:

Drink at least eight 8oz cups of fluids each day. Many people find that drinking warm or hot fluids, such as coffee and tea, helps with constipation. Fruit juices, such as prune juice, may also be helpful.

Be active every day. You can be active by walking, riding a bike or doing yoga. If you cannot walk, ask about exercises that you can do in a chair or bed. Talk with your care team about ways you can be more active.

If you do not have a bowel movement within two days, start a stool softener (Senokot® or Colace®) — two pills daily then gradually increase dose until you have a bowel movement every 1–2 days. If bowels become loose, stop taking the pills until stools become firmer and then start again at a lower dose.

## Diarrhea

Diarrhea is having frequent, soft, loose or watery bowel movements. When fluids and food pass too quickly through the body, the body cannot absorb the nutrients. This can cause electrolyte imbalances, dizziness, dehydration, and weight loss. Some chemotherapy medications can cause diarrhea. If you experience this, take IMODIUM-AD®, as directed.

### **Call the office if you have any of these symptoms:**

- Four or more loose stools in a 24-hour period that are not controlled with IMODIUM-AD® or diet adjustments
- Racing heart or feeling like it is skipping beats
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Urine output is decreased
- Pain or cramping with the diarrhea
- Fever of 100.4° or higher

### **Things to do to manage diarrhea:**

Stop taking stool softeners if you are taking them.

Eat five or six small meals and snacks each day instead of three large meals. Many people find it easier to eat smaller amounts more often.

Ask your care team if you should eat foods that are high in sodium and potassium. The body can lose these minerals with diarrhea and it is important to replace them.

Drink 8 to 12 cups of clear liquids each day. Examples include water, clear broth, ginger ale or sports drinks, such as Gatorade® or Propel®.

Eat low-fiber foods. Foods that are high in fiber can make diarrhea worse. Foods such as bananas, white rice, applesauce, white toast, and plain or vanilla yogurt will help.

Be gentle when you wipe yourself after a bowel movement. Instead of toilet paper, use a baby wipe or squirt of water from a spray bottle to clean yourself after bowel movements. Let your care team know if your rectal area is sore or bleeds.

Ask your doctor if you should try a clear liquid diet. This can give your bowels time to rest.

### **Avoid:**

- Drinks that are very hot or very cold
- Beer, wine and other types of alcohol
- Consider limiting milk or milk products, such as ice cream, milkshakes, sour cream and cheese if you develop lactose intolerance
- Spicy foods, such as hot sauce, salsa, chili and curry dishes
- Greasy and fried foods, such as french fries and hamburgers
- Foods or drinks with caffeine, such as regular coffee, black tea, cola and chocolate
- Foods or drinks that cause gas, such as cooked dried beans, cabbage, broccoli, soy milk and other soy products
- Foods that are high in fiber, such as raw fruits and vegetables, nuts, and whole-wheat breads and cereals

## Fatigue

Fatigue can make you feel weak, worn out, tired or make you feel like you are moving extra slow. Resting does not always help. This feeling is different for every person and can be caused by the chemo treatment, stress, anxiety or generally feeling overwhelmed. As you continue treatment, there are increased demands on your body and a great deal of energy is used to rebuild healthy cells. Fatigue may also be more severe if you are getting chemotherapy and radiation at the same time.



## **Things to do to manage fatigue:**

### ***Exercise.***

Staying active is the best way to help combat fatigue. A walk, bike ride or a short session of yoga can help give you extra energy.

### ***Eat and drink well.***

Often, this means five to six small meals and snacks a day rather than three large meals. Keep foods around that are easy to make, such as canned soups, frozen meals, yogurt and cottage cheese. Drink at least 2 liters of fluids each day.

### ***Plan time to rest.***

You may feel better when you rest or take a short nap during the day. Many people say that it helps to rest for just 10 to 15 minutes rather than nap for a long time. If you nap, try to sleep for less than one hour. Keeping naps short will help you sleep better at night.

### ***Try not to do too much.***

You may not have enough energy to do all the things you want to do. Choose the activities you want to do and let someone else help with the others. Try quiet activities, such as reading, knitting or an online activity.

### ***Sleep at least eight hours each night.***

This may be more sleep than you needed before oncology treatment. You are likely to sleep better at night when you are active during the day. You may also find it helpful to relax before going to bed. For instance, you might read a book, work on a jigsaw puzzle, listen to music or do other quiet hobbies.

### ***Plan a work schedule that works for you.***

Fatigue may affect the amount of energy you have for your job. You may feel well enough to work your full schedule, a few hours per day, or a few days each week. If your position allows, you may choose to ask about possibilities to work from home. You may choose to go on medical leave and stop working for a while during treatment.

### ***Let others help.***

Ask family members and friends to help when you feel fatigued. They can help with household chores, driving you to doctor's visits, shopping for food, and cooking meals for you to eat now or freeze for later.

### ***Keep a diary of how you feel each day.***

This will help you plan how to best use your time. You may choose to share the diary with your care team. Let your doctor or nurse know if you notice changes in your energy level, whether you have extra energy or are very tired.

### ***Talk with your care team.***

Your doctor may prescribe medication that can help decrease fatigue, give you a sense of well-being and increase your appetite.

## **Hair Loss**

Some chemotherapy can affect the cells that cause hair growth. Ask your healthcare team if the type of chemo you are receiving may cause hair loss.

DigniCap®, a scalp cooling system, is available at some offices and may prevent or lessen hair loss with some chemotherapy drugs. Talk with your provider for further information.

Hair loss usually occurs two to three weeks after the start of certain chemotherapy treatment. Hair may fall out in clumps or just start to thin. Hair will usually start to grow back six to eight weeks after treatment is complete.

If you choose to buy a wig, this can be done prior to losing your hair. A prescription for a wig can be provided to you. In some areas there are local groups who provide wigs for free to cancer patients. Ask your care team for this information.

## **Things to do before hair loss:**

### ***Cut your hair short or shave your head.***

You might feel more in control of hair loss if you first cut your hair or shave your head. This often makes hair loss easier to manage. If you shave your head, an electric shaver is recommended instead of a razor.

### ***Be gentle when you wash your hair.***

Use a mild shampoo, such as a baby shampoo. Dry your hair by patting (not rubbing) it with a soft towel.

### ***Sleep on a satin pillowcase or put your hair in a satin bonnet.***

This will provide less friction than cotton cases and may be more comfortable.

### **Do not use items that can hurt your scalp.**

#### **These include:**

- Straightening or curling irons
- Brush rollers or curlers
- Electric hair dryers
- Hair bands and clips
- Hairsprays
- Hair dyes
- Products to perm or relax your hair

#### **Things to do after hair loss:**

##### ***Protect your scalp.***

Protect the scalp by wearing a hat, turban or scarf when you are outside. Try to avoid places that are very hot or very cold. This includes tanning beds and outside in the sun or cold air. Always apply sunscreen or sunblock.

##### ***Stay warm.***

You may feel colder if you lose your hair, as body heat can be lost through the head. Wear a hat, turban, scarf, or wig to help stay warm.

##### ***Talk about your feelings.***

Many people feel angry, depressed, or embarrassed about hair loss. If you are worried or upset, you might want to talk about these feelings with your care team, family member, close friend, or someone who has had hair loss caused by cancer treatment.

### **Low Blood Counts**

Your blood counts may be altered by treatment and your provider will be following lab values closely.

#### **Neutropenia**

Neutropenia is a low neutrophil count, the white blood cell that help fight infection in the body. Chemotherapy often causes the number of these cells in your body to drop but if your neutrophil count is too low, this may delay treatment and cause an increased risk for infection. To help in this situation, there are medications that can be given to help boost these cell counts. Your healthcare team will talk with you about these medications, if needed.

### **When am I at the highest risk for infection?**

The term “nadir” means low point. Patients are at the highest risk for infection roughly seven to ten days after each chemo cycle.

#### **What are symptoms of infection I should look for?**

Fever is often the first sign of infection. *Call your clinic if you have a fever of 100.4° or higher.* The number for the clinic can be found on the front of this guide. Do not take medications that will reduce your fever without your healthcare team’s approval. These are medications such as ibuprofen (Motrin® or Advil®), naproxen (Aleve®) or acetaminophen (Tylenol®).

#### **Other symptoms of infection include:**

- Chills
- Swelling or redness anywhere on the body, especially a wound, IV site or port
- A new or worsening cough
- Pain with urination or cloudy urine

If you experience shortness of breath, changes in mental status or confusion, go to the nearest Emergency Room or call 9-1-1 for assistance

#### **Things to do to prevent infection:**

***Wash your hands often with soap and water.*** Be sure to wash your hands before cooking and eating, after you use the bathroom, blow your nose, cough, sneeze, or touch animals. Carry hand sanitizer for times when you are not near soap and water. It is also important to wash your hands after touching shared surfaces such as public telephones, gas pumps, ATM machines, doorknobs, or other public surfaces or items.

##### ***Sanitize commonly used items and surfaces.***

Use sanitizing wipes to clean surfaces and items that you touch or things that may drop on the floor.

##### ***Be gentle and thorough when you wipe yourself after a bowel movement.***

Instead of toilet paper, use a baby wipe or squirt of water from a spray bottle to clean yourself. Let your doctor or nurse know if your rectal area is sore or bleeds or if you have hemorrhoids.

***Stay away from people who are sick.***

This includes people with colds, flu, measles or chicken pox. You also need to stay away from children who just had a “live virus” vaccine for chicken pox or polio. Call your care team if you have any questions.

***Stay away from crowds.***

Try not to be around a lot of people. For instance, plan to go shopping or to the movies when the stores and theaters are less crowded.

***Be careful not to cut or nick yourself.***

Do not cut or tear your nail cuticles. Use an electric shaver instead of a razor. And be extra careful when using scissors, needles or knives.

***Watch for signs of infection or changes around your catheter.***

Signs to look for include drainage, redness, swelling or soreness. Tell your care team about any changes you notice near a port or catheter.

***Maintain good oral care.***

Brush your teeth after meals and before you go to bed. Use a very soft toothbrush. You can make the bristles even softer by running hot water over them just before you brush. Keep your toothbrush clean by swirling it in antibacterial mouthwash or hydrogen peroxide. Use a mouth rinse that does not contain alcohol. Check with your care team before going to the dentist.

***Take good care of your skin.***

Do not squeeze or scratch pimples. Use lotion to soften and heal dry, cracked skin. Dry yourself after a bath or shower by gently patting your skin. Be careful not to rub your skin.

***Clean cuts right away.***

Use warm water, soap and an antiseptic to clean your cuts. Clean your cut like this every day until your cut has a scab over it.

***Be careful around animals.***

Do not clean your cat's litter box, pick up dog waste or clean bird cages or fish tanks. Be sure to wash your hands after touching pets and/or other animals.

***Do not get a flu shot or other type of vaccine without first asking your care team.***

Some vaccines contain a live virus which you should not be exposed to.

***Practice food safety rules.***

- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.
- Do not leave leftovers sitting out. Put them in the refrigerator as soon as you are finished eating. Wash raw vegetables and fruits well before eating them. Avoid those that cannot be washed well, such as raspberries. Do not eat raw or undercooked fish, seafood, meat, chicken or eggs.
- Do not consume items that are past the freshness date. Do not eat foods that have moldy spots, even if you cut them out.

**Thrombocytopenia**

Platelets are the clotting cells of the blood, and chemotherapy can cause the number of these cells in your body to drop, which is called Thrombocytopenia. If your platelets are too low, you are at risk for bleeding and may require platelet infusion. This may cause a delay in your chemotherapy treatment. The care team will discuss bleeding precautions with you if your platelets are low.

**Call the clinic if you have any of these symptoms:**

- Bruises, especially if you did not bump into anything
- Small, red spots on your skin
- Red- or pink-colored urine
- Black or bloody bowel movements
- Bleeding from your gums or nose
- Heavy bleeding during your menstrual cycle or for a prolonged period
- Vaginal bleeding not caused by your menstrual cycle
- Headaches or changes in your vision
- A warm or hot feeling in your arm or leg
- Feeling very sleepy or confused

**Things to do to prevent bleeding or injury:**

- Brush your teeth with a soft toothbrush and be very gentle while flossing your teeth.
- Be careful with any sharp objects like knives or tools.

- To prevent falls, do not climb on ladders or stools.
- Use an electric razor when shaving.
- Protect your hands and feet from scrapes or cuts by wearing gloves while working in the yard and wearing shoes at all times.
- Blow your nose gently.
- Apply gentle but firm pressure to any cuts until the bleeding stops.

## Anemia

Red blood cells carry oxygen to the body's tissues and waste away from the tissues. Chemotherapy can cause the number of these cells to drop causing anemia. If the red blood cell counts are low, you may experience some fatigue and shortness of breath. There are medications that can be given to help boost these cell counts or you may need a blood transfusion if your blood count falls too low. Your healthcare team will discuss this with you, if needed, and will follow your blood counts closely during treatment.

### **Call the clinic if you have any of these symptoms:**

- Your level of fatigue changes or you are not able to do your usual activities.
- You feel dizzy or faint.
- You feel short of breath.
- It feels like your heart is pounding or beating very fast.

## Nausea/Vomiting

Nausea and vomiting can occur while you are getting treatment, right after, or hours or days later. There are medications that can help prevent nausea and vomiting called antiemetic or anti-nausea drugs. You may need to take these drugs one hour before each treatment and for a few days after. Antiemetic medications may also be given intravenously prior to your treatment.

How long you take anti-nausea drugs after treatment will depend on the type of therapy you are getting and how you react to it. If one anti-nausea drug does not work well for you, your provider can prescribe a different one.

Sometimes more than one type of medication is needed to help with nausea. Talk with your care team about medications to control nausea and vomiting caused by treatment.

If you continue to suffer from nausea or vomiting after taking the medications and adjusting your diet, please call the clinic.

### **Things to do to prevent or manage nausea or vomiting:**

#### *Take anti-nausea medications as prescribed.*

Do not wait until you are vomiting to start these medications.

#### *Prevent nausea.*

One way to prevent vomiting is to prevent nausea. Try eating bland, easy-to-digest foods and drinks that do not upset your stomach. These include plain crackers, toast, and gelatin.

#### *Plan when it's best for you to eat and drink.*

Some people feel better when they eat a light meal or snack before chemotherapy. Others feel better when they have chemotherapy on an empty stomach.

#### *Eat small meals and snacks.*

Instead of three large meals each day, many people eat five or six small meals and snacks. Do not drink a lot before or during meals and avoid lying down right after you eat.

#### *Drink plenty of fluids between meals.*

This will help with nausea and will also help remove toxins from your system after treatment. Hydration is important during oncology treatment. Fluids can be obtained through:

- Water
- Broths and cream soups
- Sports drinks (Gatorade® or Powerade®)
- Powdered electrolyte products (Drip Drop® or Ensure® Rapid Hydration)
- Teas
- Ginger ale or Sprite®
- Juice



- Jell-O® and pudding
- Popsicles/ice cream/sherbet
- Milk/milkshakes (including the use of milk alternatives)

***Eat and drink items that are not too hot.***

Give hot foods and drinks time to cool down or make them colder by adding ice.

***Avoid strong smells.***

Try to avoid foods and drinks with strong smells, such as coffee, fish, onions, garlic and foods that are cooking.

***Try small, soothing cold treats.***

Suck on small bites of ice chips, popsicles or sugar-free mints or tart candies.

Do not use tart candies if you have mouth or throat sores.

***If you feel like vomiting, breathe deeply and slowly or get fresh air.***

You might also try to distract yourself by chatting with friends or family, listening to music, or watching a movie or TV shows.

***You may also use essential oils or homeopathic/complementary treatments.***

These should be discussed with your healthcare team first.

## Mouth Sores

Sometimes chemotherapy can harm fast-growing cells, such as those that line your mouth, throat and lips. This can affect the teeth, gums, the lining of the mouth and the glands that make saliva.

**Mouth and throat problems may include:**

- Dry mouth
- Changes in taste and smell, such as when food tastes like metal or chalk, has no taste or does not taste or smell like it used to
- Infections of your gums, teeth or tongue
- Increased sensitivity to hot or cold foods
- Mouth sores or areas of tenderness
- White or dark patches
- Trouble eating when your mouth gets very sore

## Things to do to manage mouth and throat problems:

***Visit a dentist at least two weeks before starting chemotherapy treatment.***

It is important that your mouth is as healthy as possible, which means having all your dental work done before chemotherapy starts. If you cannot go to the dentist before chemotherapy starts, ask your care team when it is safe to go. Be sure to tell your dentist that you have cancer and about your oncology treatment plan.

***Check your mouth and tongue every day.***

By checking your mouth, you can see or feel problems (such as mouth sores, white spots or infections) as soon as they start. Inform your care team right away if you see any of these problems.

***Keep your mouth moist.***

You can keep your mouth moist by sipping water throughout the day, sucking on ice chips or sugar-free hard candy, or chewing sugar-free gum. Ask your care team about saliva substitutes if your mouth seems very dry.

***Brush your teeth, gums and tongue after each meal and at bedtime.***

Use an extra-soft toothbrush. You can make the bristles even softer by rinsing your toothbrush in hot water before you brush.

If brushing is painful, try cleaning your teeth with cotton swabs or Toothettes®, which are shaped sponges on a stick.

Use a fluoride toothpaste or special fluoride gel that your dentist prescribes.

Do not use mouthwash that contains alcohol. Instead, rinse your mouth three to four times a day with a solution of 1/4 teaspoon baking soda, 1/8 teaspoon salt, and one cup of warm water. Swish/gargle every two hours as needed and follow with a plain water rinse.

***Gently floss your teeth every day.***

If your gums bleed or hurt, avoid those areas but floss your other teeth. Ask your care team about flossing if your platelet count is low.

If you wear dentures, make sure they fit well and keep them clean. Also limit the length of time that you wear the dentures.

***Be careful what you eat when your mouth is sore.***

Choose foods that are moist, soft and easy to chew or swallow. These include cooked cereals, mashed potatoes and scrambled eggs.

Use a blender to puree cooked foods so that they are easier to eat.

Take small bites of food, chew slowly, and sip liquids while you eat.

Soften food with gravy, sauces, broth, yogurt or other liquids.

Eat foods that are cool or room temperature. You may find that warm and hot foods hurt your mouth or throat.

Suck on ice chips or popsicles.

Call your care team or dentist if your mouth is very painful. Your doctor or dentist may prescribe medication for pain or mouth moisture. Make sure to give your dentist the phone number of your care team.

**Avoid things that can hurt, scrape or burn your mouth, such as:**

- Sharp or crunchy foods; such as crackers, potato chips, or corn chips
- Spicy foods, such as hot sauce, curry dishes, salsa, or chili
- Citrus fruits or juices; such as orange, lemon, and grapefruit
- Food and drinks that are high in sugar, such as candy or soda
- Beer, wine, and other types of alcohol
- Toothpicks or other sharp objects
- Tobacco products; including cigarettes, pipes, cigars, and chewing tobacco

## **Skin and Nail Changes**

Some chemotherapy treatments can affect the skin and nails. These effects are usually mild and many of these changes will get better once you have finished the chemotherapy.

**Skin changes may include:**

Itching, dryness, redness, rashes, and peeling

***Sensitivity to the sun (when you burn quickly)***

This problem can even happen to people who have a very dark skin color.

***Hyperpigmentation***

Hyperpigmentation is a problem that results in dark patches on your skin or a darker skin color. Dark patches may occur in the following locations:

- Around your joints
- Under your nails
- In your mouth
- Along the vein used to give you chemotherapy
- Under tape or dressings
- In your hair

***Radiation recall***

Some oncology treatment causes the previously radiated skin to turn red. The color can range from very light to bright red. Your skin may blister, peel or be very painful.

***Allergic reactions to chemotherapy***

Some skin changes mean that you are allergic to the chemotherapy. Let your care team know right away if you wheeze or have trouble breathing along with:

- Sudden and severe itching
- Rashes
- Hives

***Nail Changes***

Some chemotherapy causes nails to become darker, turn yellow, or become brittle and cracked. In severe instances, the nails will loosen, lift from the nail bed and fall off. New nails will grow back after treatment. Let your care team know if your cuticles are red and painful.

**To manage skin and nail changes:**

- Sprinkle your skin with cornstarch.
- Take quick showers or sponge baths instead of long, hot baths.
- Pat yourself dry after bathing.

- Wash with a mild, moisturizing soap.
- Put on cream or lotion while your skin is still damp after washing.
- Do not use perfume, cologne, or aftershave lotion that has alcohol.
- Take a colloidal oatmeal bath for itchiness.
- Keep your face clean and dry.
- Ask your care team if you can use medicated creams or soaps for your face.
- Avoid direct sunlight Especially during the hours of 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
- Use sunscreen lotion with an SPF of 30 or higher, or zinc oxide ointments that block the sun's rays entirely
- Keep your lips moist with a lip balm that has an SPF of 30 or higher.
- Wear light-colored pants, long-sleeve cotton shirts, and hats with wide brims.
- Do not use tanning beds.
- Wear gloves when washing dishes, working in the garden or cleaning the house.
- Use tea tree oil if your nail beds loosen.

### To Manage Symptoms of Radiation Recall

- Protect the area of your skin from the sun.
- Do not use tanning beds.
- Place a cool, wet cloth in the radiation recall area.
- Wear clothes that are made of cotton, linen, or other soft fabrics. This includes your undergarments like bras, underpants and t-shirts.

### Sleep Problems

Some cancer patients have trouble sleeping due to pain, anxiety, depression, side effects of treatment, night sweats, or staying overnight in the hospital. Your body will need more rest as you go through treatment.

#### Not getting enough sleep can cause:

- Increased pain
- Memory changes
- Increased fatigue
- Decreased healing
- Increased sickness/infection

### Things to do to manage problems with sleep:

- Get at least 20-60 minutes of light exercise per day a minimum of two to three hours before bedtime.
- Avoid drinks with caffeine or alcohol in the evening.
- Drink warm, decaffeinated herbal tea or milk before bedtime.
- Get a light massage or try relaxation techniques prior to going to bed.
- Keeping a nightly routine at least 30-60 minutes before bed signals the body to wind down; habits include turning down the lights, avoiding screen time, and setting a consistent bedtime
- Use the bed for sleep or sex only. Do not watch television in bed.
- Take any sleep aid medications at the same time every evening.
- Adjust the temperature in the bedroom for maximum comfort.

### Respiratory Side Effect Management

- Continue use of asthma or allergy prescriptions during your treatment.
- Call your doctor if you experience a new cough or your cough worsens.
- Call 9-1-1 or go to the Emergency Room immediately if you experience chest pain or you develop difficulty breathing, especially if it is sudden.

### Liver Side Effect Management

- Drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration and eat a well-balanced diet.
- Avoid alcohol and taking more prescription pain medication than recommended.
- Call your doctor immediately if you experience fever, drowsiness, or confusion, if your skin has turned yellow, or you have severe stomach pain or swelling.

### Hormonal Side Effect Management

- Eat a healthy diet and exercise regularly.
- Continue taking any thyroid medication you have been prescribed.
- Call your doctor immediately if you experience headaches with dizziness, confusion, drowsiness or fainting, vision changes, fever, nausea or vomiting.

## Mental Health Side Effects

### Anxiety

It is perfectly normal to feel anxious about a diagnosis of cancer and starting treatment. It is a very frightening time for patients and their families. Anxiety may feel like overwhelming fear or stress, worry or even moments of complete panic. Anxiety can cause many different feelings in your body.

- Anxiety may affect appetite.
- Anxiety can cause headaches and muscle pains or tightness.
- Anxiety can upset the stomach, causing diarrhea or nausea/vomiting.
- Anxiety can cause shortness of breath or make it hard to breath.
- Anxiety may cause restlessness and make the patient unable to sit still.
- Anxiety may cause difficulty sleeping at night.

### Things to do to manage anxiety:

Not dealing with the anxiety can make it harder to fight the cancer.

- Listen to relaxing music or use guided meditation.
- Do things that you enjoyed prior to the diagnosis.
- Get plenty of rest and do it in a quiet place.
- Journal your feelings or read for pleasure.
- Get light exercise as you are able.
- Talk with your healthcare team about how you are feeling.

### Caregivers can help with these feelings by:

- Staying with the patient during these times.
- Try to be reassuring and stay calm.
- Talk with the patient about things that you would have discussed prior to their diagnosis.
- Speak with the healthcare team if you are worried about the patient.

### Depression

Many people struggle with feelings of sadness after they get a cancer diagnosis and during treatment.

This is normal and can change from day to day. However, if these feelings persist for more than a day or two at a time, this needs to be addressed with your healthcare team. If you feel like you are depressed, we need to know if there is a problem so we can help. Some signs of depression are:

- A feeling of helplessness, hopelessness, or that life has no meaning.
- No interest in being with family or friends.
- Not enjoying hobbies/activities.
- Crying for long periods of time or every day.
- Decrease in appetite or weight loss.
- Changes in energy level; sleeping all the time, or not sleeping well.
- Thinking about a plan to act on thoughts of suicide or frequent thoughts of death or dying.

If you experience any of these signs, please talk with your healthcare team immediately.

*If you feel like harming yourself or others, call 9-1-1, go to the nearest Emergency Room, or call the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 9-8-8.*

### Questions for my team:

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## Activity During Treatment

Activity during treatment is important to help to reduce fatigue, keep your strength up, improve heart health, improve sleep and mood, and gives you more energy. We encourage you to stay as active as you can. You can continue to work during treatment if your job is not something that will increase your risk for injury or infection. You can also continue with your hobbies and encourage light exercise, such as walking or biking. Please do outdoor exercises in the cooler times of day and be careful to keep skin covered and protected from the sun.



### Some helpful hints when exercising:

- Always talk with your doctor before starting any new fitness routine.
- Ask family or friends to join you.
- You can use a fitness tracker to help you stay motivated.
- Doing a little exercise is better than doing nothing.
- Keep as much of your normal schedule as you can while in treatment.
- Work – ask your doctor if you can continue to work during treatment.
- Hobbies – continue to do the things that make you happy, just do not overdo it.
- Nap as needed, but do not stay in bed all day. If you have trouble with daily activities, let your care team know.

### Be Safe!

- Do not exercise if you are not feeling well, have a fever, are feeling nauseated, or are vomiting.
- If you have swelling in your ankles, unexplained weight gain, please call the clinic immediately.
- Avoid public gyms if your white blood count is low.
- Avoid contact sports if you have a "catheter" or central line catheter (PICC). Do not use a rifle on the side of the port or central line as trauma to the area can damage the site.
- You can swim if your port site is healed and it is not in use. If you have a PICC line in place, do not swim or submerge your body in bathwater.

### Questions for my team:

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### Nutrition During Treatment

Eating well during oncology treatment is essential. Fill your plate at mealtimes with 2/3 fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes (beans/peas) and only 1/3 of your plate should be animal products. Have at least five servings of fruits and vegetables every day.

A serving size can be 1/2 cup cooked fruits or vegetables, one cup raw fruits or vegetables or one baseball sized piece of fresh fruit. Getting enough nutrition is helpful in fighting off fatigue, constipation and weight loss. A balanced diet is the most important thing to have.

Protein is important while you are going through treatment because this is what your body will use to rebuild the healthy cells and help you keep your muscles strong. You should have protein with every meal. Many people also use protein drinks/shakes to help keep up with the protein demand. This can also provide additional calories. Try not to drink these at mealtime but between meals instead.

#### *Plant based proteins include:*

Nuts, nut butters, seeds, legumes and soy.

#### *Animal based proteins include:*

Beef, pork, chicken, eggs, milk, cheese, fish or other seafood and yogurt.

It is important that all the meats that you eat are thoroughly cooked. Do not eat anything raw or unwashed while on treatment.

### Food safety is a must while on treatment.

- Be sure not to cross contaminate your raw meats with your fresh fruits and vegetables while shopping or putting away.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables before you eat them.
- Be sure to keep the counters in your kitchen clean. Wipe them down with antibacterial wipes or bleach water regularly and especially after having raw meat out on the counter.
- Do not eat/drink anything unpasteurized.
- It is important that you wash your hands before preparing or eating food, after using the restroom and after touching any pets.
- Do not put cooked foods back onto a plate that held raw meat without washing it first.
- Properly package and refrigerate any leftovers immediately after the meal is finished.

It is also very important to stay hydrated. We recommend at least two liters of fluids per day. You should start this the day before your first treatment and continue until the full completion of treatment.

If you would like more information about nutrition during treatment or if you are having trouble with eating/weight loss, please talk with your healthcare team. We can connect you with our staff nutritionists.

**Notes about my nutrition:**

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**Treatment Day**

There are many different medications that are used to treat cancer. These medications can be used alone or together in combination treatments. Your oncologist will use guidelines to decide what the best plan of treatment is for you as there are many factors that weigh into that decision such as diagnosis and your general health.

Some patients will be in the treatment room for less than an hour and others will spend all day, depending on the medications needed. We will always check your blood work before giving any treatment.

Please make sure that you dress warmly or bring a jacket with you in case you get cold. It is common for patients to feel cooler once we have started the IV fluids associated with treatment. If we will be using a port for your treatment, please wear a button-down shirt or a shirt with a wide neck so we can easily access your port. If we are placing an IV in your arm, make sure you wear short sleeves or can easily push the sleeve up past your elbows.

When you arrive for treatment, we will take your vital signs (blood pressure, temperature, heart rate, and weight). Once we know your blood work and your vital signs are within parameters, we will proceed with treatment as planned.

There are often pre-medications that are given to support you while receiving cancer therapy. These medications will be administered before the treatment and may include options like Tylenol®, antihistamines (such as Benadryl®), anti-nausea agents, and steroids. The purpose of these medications is to help keep you comfortable during treatment and decrease the likelihood of reactions to the cancer therapy.

Any time we give you a new medication, we will ask you for your name and date of birth. This is for your safety and to assure that you are getting what is ordered for you.

Once the pre-medications have been infused, an observation period will follow to allow the pre-medications to provide their maximum benefit.

After the observation period, the treatment infusion will then begin. You should not feel anything different while the treatment is being infused. If you have any change in how you feel during the infusion, such as itching, shortness of breath, chest pain, low back pain, chills, sweating, or tingling of your mouth or lips, alert the nurse immediately. The sooner you make the nurse aware, the sooner they can respond to help alleviate your symptoms and prevent them from getting worse.

You may get up and move around during treatment. Please feel free to use the restroom or refill your water as needed. If you need assistance, the nurses will be more than happy to help; you need only ask.

**Items I want/need to take with me on treatment days:**

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## After Treatment

Treatment medications are eliminated from the body through bodily fluids. This means there may be medication in your urine, stool, saliva, vomit, semen, sweat, and vaginal fluids. It is important that other people in the house are not exposed to these fluids.

There are some basic guidelines to follow when you get home from treatment. It is important that you handle your own soiled clothing/linens whenever possible. If someone else must handle these things, they need to wear gloves and wash their hands immediately afterwards. If someone accidentally touches body fluids, they need to wash their hands immediately. Keep all children away from body fluids as well.

### If there are soiled clothes/linens:

- You should gather all soiled articles and wash immediately. Wash separately from all other clothing/linens in hot water using your normal laundry detergent.
- If the soiled articles cannot be washed right away, place them in a plastic bag and seal them until they can be washed.
- When you are finished cleaning up soiled clothing or linen, make sure to wash your hands.

### When using the restroom:

- After using the toilet, it is important that you flush twice with the toilet seat lid down for at least the first 48 hours after treatment.
- If possible, use a separate bathroom from everyone else in the house. If this is not possible,

make sure to wipe down the toilet seat after each use with a sanitizing wipe.

- Wash your hands after using the toilet, and avoid touching surfaces until they are clean.
- If you are using a bedside commode or bedpan, make sure to use gloves when emptying and cleaning.

You can enjoy your friends and family if you feel up to it. Please make sure that anyone you are spending time with is not sick. If you have visitors in your house, wipe down the frequently touched surfaces (door knobs, light switches, sink handles, etc.) after everyone leaves. It is important to wear a mask when in public to protect yourself from the germs of others. Try to run your errands early in the morning when there will be a fewer number of people or have someone else run the errands for you.

### If you plan to have sexual intercourse while receiving treatment:

- Use barrier contraceptives for the first 72 hours after treatment. This is important for both men and women.
- Do not get pregnant while on treatment or let anyone who is pregnant be exposed to any body fluids.

If you are taking an oral anti-cancer pill, these same precautions need to be used for the entire time you are on treatment. Do not allow anyone else to touch your pills except you. If someone else needs to help you with your medications, they should wear gloves when handling. Do not flush unused pills down the toilet or throw them away in the garbage. Utilize pharmacy take-back kiosks, mail-back programs, or DEA-authorized collection sites.

## Questions for my team:

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## Survivorship

Survivorship begins at diagnosis and focuses on the patient's health and quality of life during treatment, after treatment, and throughout the remainder of life. This includes the patient's ability to get follow-up healthcare and treatment for any physical, sexual health, psychosocial, or financial concerns. Survivorship also manages the late effects of treatment, secondary cancers, and the overall quality of life.

Our providers continue to see patients after active treatment is complete. Please let us know how we can help you maintain the best quality of life during your survivorship journey.

## CareSpace

You can view your medical chart from home if you have internet access.

### Go to FLCancer.com

Click on "CareSpace" in the top right corner. The first time you login you will need the instructions sent via email by the office staff. Follow the instructions to complete registration. From here you can access your lab results, view pathology and radiology reports and update your medication list. You can also message your care team from there. If there are results listed that you cannot view yet, it is usually because the results are not back or the provider has not reviewed it yet.

## Patient Resources

When looking for information online, be careful about your web searches. Some trusted sites that you can go to for information on your diagnosis and treatment and for managing side effects are:

### American Cancer Society

General cancer information, as well as resources for information on diagnosis, transportation and caregiver/family support

Customer Service: (800) 277-2345

[cancer.org](http://cancer.org)

### National Comprehensive Cancer Network

Guidelines for treatment by cancer type

[nccn.org/patients/guidelines/cancers.aspx](http://nccn.org/patients/guidelines/cancers.aspx)

### National Cancer Institute

Information on cancer from diagnosis to research

[cancer.gov](http://cancer.gov)

### Cancer.Net

Sponsored by the American Association of Clinical Oncology – gives physician approved information about diagnosis, treatment, clinical trials and symptom management

[cancer.net](http://cancer.net)

### Chemocare.com

Look up your chemotherapy medications and learn how to manage side effects

[chemocare.com](http://chemocare.com)

