

Chemotherapy

Chemotherapy is a cancer treatment that uses drugs to destroy cancer cells. It is also called "chemo." Today, there are many different types of chemotherapy, so, the way you feel during treatment may be very different from someone else.

How can chemotherapy help me?

Chemotherapy can be used to:

- Destroy cancer cells
- Stop cancer cells from spreading
- Slow the growth of cancer cells

Chemotherapy can be given alone or with other treatments. It can also help other treatments work better. For example, you may get chemotherapy before or after surgery or radiation therapy. You may also get chemotherapy before a peripheral blood stem cell transplant. Check with your doctor or nurse before you take any medicine, vitamins, or herbs. Some of these can change the way chemotherapy works.

How is chemotherapy given?

Chemotherapy can be given in these forms:

- An IV (intravenously)
- A shot (injection) into a muscle or other part of your body
- A pill or liquid that you swallow
- A cream that is rubbed on your skin
- Other ways

When will I get chemotherapy?

Delivery of chemotherapy may vary. You may get treatment every day, every week, or every month. The treatment period is followed by a period of rest when you won't get chemotherapy. This rest period gives your body a chance to build healthy new cells.

Your doctor or nurse will talk with you about your treatment schedule. Ask for a written copy of it, as well.

How will I feel during treatment?

Each person reacts differently and every treatment is different, so it is not always possible to tell how you will feel. Some people feel well enough to keep their normal schedules at home or at work. Others feel more tired. Today, many side effects can be prevented or controlled. Talk with your doctor or nurse to learn what side effects you may have and how to manage them.