

Having anti-cancer therapy:

chemotherapy and biological therapy -
Yorkshire and Humber Cancer Network
(South)



Information for patients

Chemotherapy



What is anti-cancer therapy?

Your doctor will have talked to you about your diagnosis and explained that you will be having anti-cancer therapy. Anti-cancer therapy is cancer treatment using drugs. There are many different kinds of anti-cancer therapy and they work in different ways. Some anti-cancer therapies are called chemotherapy and some are called biological therapy.

Each patient has an individual treatment plan. Before you start your treatment we will explain to you what the treatment involves. We will also ask you to sign a consent form to say that you understand.

Anti-cancer therapy can be given in different ways. It can be given as an oral treatment, for example as tablets. It can also be given as a fluid into the vein. This is called intravenous treatment. Some chemotherapy treatments can have both oral and intravenous medicines.

The amount of time it takes to give intravenous anti-cancer therapy will be different for each treatment. If your treatment can be given within one day, you may have your anti-cancer treatment as a day patient at the hospital. If your treatment is over a few days you will need to stay in hospital. Your doctor will explain how your anti-cancer treatment will be given.

All of the treatments are given by highly skilled nurses who have been trained in anti-cancer therapy.

Where will I have my treatment?

You might have your treatment at your local hospital as a day case in an outpatient chemotherapy area. The hospitals that offer this service are in Barnsley, Chesterfield, Doncaster and Rotherham. If you live in Sheffield you will have your treatment at Weston Park Hospital. Even if you do not live in Sheffield your doctor may feel it is more appropriate for you to have your anti-cancer therapy at Weston Park Hospital. This can be either as an inpatient or as an outpatient. You will be given separate information about the hospital you will be attending.

If you become unwell during your treatment you may need to be admitted to Weston Park hospital as this is the specialist centre for cancer treatment in this area.

How will I find out about my treatment?

When you come for your treatment we will tell you:

- What will happen at the particular hospital you go to
- How to get help if you are ill or have any side-effects during your treatment
- How to look after yourself, including advice on eating and drinking

We will also tell you about the:

- side-effects of your treatment
- fertility and hormone changes
- emotional support available
- social support available
- changes you may need to make in your lifestyle (for example work, leisure activities)

You will be given written information about the treatment you will be receiving. We must seek your consent for treatment before it is given. Staff will explain the risks, benefits and alternatives before they ask for

your consent. If you are unsure about any aspect of your treatment, please do not hesitate to ask for more information.

Will I be asked to take part in research or a clinical trial?

Research involving patients is one of the most important ways of finding out new information, which can then lead to advances in treatment. This means that we may ask if you are willing to take part in research or a clinical trial.

If so, the doctor and the research nurse will explain fully what is involved in the clinical trial. We will give you time to think about whether or not you want to be involved and if you do, we will ask you to sign an extra form to give your consent to being in a study. You do not have to agree to being part of a research programme or clinical trial. If you do not want to take part, your decision will not affect your care in any way.

If you would like more information about this please speak to the doctors or nurses or, if you have access to the web, you can go to:

<http://crsy.group.shef.ac.uk/trials/trials.html>

What information will my doctor need from me before treatment starts?

Your doctor will need to know about:

- Any other illness or conditions you suffer from
- Any allergies you have, to medicines or food
- Other medicines you are taking
- If you are pregnant or planning a pregnancy
- If you are breastfeeding

What do I do if I have any questions or concerns when I am at home?

Telephone the ward or treatment unit where you have your treatment and the staff there will be happy to help you.

If your concerns are about the side effects of your treatment you may need to ring Weston Park Hospital for advice. They provide a telephone advice service for all patients. When you start your treatment, the nurses in your treatment area will give you information about when you should call the cancer centre for advice.

Where else might I find information?

You will find leaflets on display in the hospital, either in the clinic or on the ward.

Beware of some Internet sites - they might not give accurate information. You can discuss anything you hear about with doctors, nurses or pharmacy staff.

You can find useful information from the following:

The Cancer Information and Support Centre

- 23 Northumberland Road (behind Weston Park Hospital)
- **0114 553 3330**
- **www.cancersupportcentre.co.uk**

Macmillan

- **0808 808 00 00**
- **www.macmillan.org.uk**



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