

Chemotherapy

The key question to ask is, “What proof is there that the treatment being offered will cure, extend actual survival, or increase the quality of life?” Ask to see scientific papers and reports on the treatment. If necessary, seek professional help in interpreting this information.

1. What is Chemotherapy?
2. Why are you recommending I have Chemotherapy?
3. Why do you feel Chemotherapy is the best option for me?
4. How will it help me?
5. What is the goal of the treatment?
6. What is the success rate for this treatment?
7. Will Chemotherapy be my only treatment?
8. What are the benefits and risks of Chemotherapy?

Chemotherapy Drugs

9. What are the names of the drugs?
10. Why are you recommending those particular drugs?
11. Is there evidence that they are more effective than other chemotherapy drugs?
12. How many drugs will I be taking at one time?
13. Will the drugs make me prone to infections?
14. What is a Chemosensitivity Test? ([See explanatory notes below](#))
15. Would I benefit from this test?
16. If so, where will this test be carried out and when will the results be known?
17. Is Chronotherapy available to me? ([See explanatory notes below](#))
18. Is there an alternative therapy that has proven effective in treating my type of cancer?
19. What would be the “down-side” of trying an alternative therapy before starting any Chemotherapy?
20. What are the likely consequences if I don’t have this treatment?
21. Where can I find more information about alternative therapies?

Undergoing Chemotherapy

22. What kind of chemotherapy will I undergo?
23. Will I need to go to hospital to have this treatment?
24. If yes, how long will I have to spend in the hospital?
25. How will the chemotherapy be given?
26. Who will give it to me?
27. How often will it be given?
28. Over what period of time?
29. How long will each treatment take?
30. What parts of my body will be targeted?
31. What will this treatment do to my body?
32. Will I feel pain or discomfort during the treatment?
33. Can I go home immediately afterwards?
34. Will chemotherapy affect my usual activities? If so, for how long?
35. Will I need to take time off work or adjust my work schedule?
36. Will I need help with daily activities during treatment?
37. When I am taking Chemotherapy, can I eat all kinds of foods?
38. Can I drink alcohol?
39. Can I take other medications at the same time?

40. Are there any special precautions I need to take while on chemotherapy?
41. Are there special instructions to follow while I'm having chemotherapy or after the treatment is finished?

Following Chemotherapy

42. Will I have pain or discomfort after treatment?
43. How long will it last?
44. How can it be managed?
45. What are the possible side effects?
46. When would they start?
47. How are they usually managed?
48. Are there any side effects I should report right away?
49. Who do I call?
50. What symptoms – swelling, fever, nausea and so on – might be a sign of a problem?
51. Is there anything I can do to lessen the side effects?
52. Can the cancer spread, even though I am on Chemotherapy?
53. Will I gain or lose weight?
54. Will I lose my hair? If so, how soon?
55. Will I be nauseous?
56. Will I be exhausted?
57. Will I get mouth sores?
58. What type of activities should I avoid while on this treatment? For how long?
59. What kinds of feelings (such as sadness, anger, vulnerability, loss of control) am I likely to have after treatment?
60. Where can I find help coping with my feelings if I need it?
61. What is cachexia?
62. How dangerous is it?
63. Is it avoidable?
64. If not, what can be done to reduce it's effects?

Long Term

65. Are there any possible long-term effects?
66. What are they and how are they usually managed?
67. Are there any special exercises I can do to help my recovery?
68. Will I need physiotherapy?
69. Are there any special instructions to follow while I am receiving chemotherapy or after the treatment is finished?
70. How long will it take for the treated area to heal?
71. Will I need help at home?
72. Will I be able to work?
73. What do I need to know about taking care of my skin during treatment?
74. Is it ok to use perfume, deodorants or lotions?
75. Will Chemotherapy affect my sex life?
76. When will I know if the Chemotherapy is proving successful?
77. What are the chances of the cancer returning?
78. What follow-up tests do I need, and how often will I need them?
79. Where can I find more detailed information about Chemotherapy?

Complementary therapy.

80. Would complementary therapies help me?
81. Is there one in particular you would suggest?
82. Is this therapy available locally?
83. What are the known risks and benefits in using this therapy?
84. When would it be safe for me to use this therapy with my conventional treatment?
85. What is a safe amount of this therapy?
86. Will you help me track both the benefits and side effects of the therapy?
87. Do you have any suggestions about other complementary therapies that could be helpful for my type of cancer?
88. Where can I find more information about complementary therapy?

Family concerns

89. How does a partner or spouse usually react?
90. What can we do to help each other?
91. How can I talk about the changes in my body with my spouse or partner?
92. How do I talk to my friends and family about cancer and my treatment?
93. How do family and friends usually react?
94. What support is available for my family members?
95. Where can I get more detailed information?

FERTILITY concerns

96. Will the treatment affect my ability to have children?
97. Is there another treatment that might preserve my ability to have children without reducing my chance of long-term survival?
98. What's the risk of congenital abnormality (birth defects) in any children conceived after my treatment ends?
99. Will you refer me to a fertility specialist to discuss my options before starting my treatment?
100. Will preserving my fertility delay my treatment?

For Women:

101. Is there anything you can do to protect my ovaries?
102. Will you do a pregnancy test before starting treatment to make certain I am not pregnant now?
103. If I am pregnant, how will this affect my treatment?
104. Is it possible to harvest eggs, fertilize them, and store them as embryos before starting treatment?
105. Can I still conceive a child when I am getting cancer treatment?
106. Should my partner and I use birth control measures during treatment?
107. What kind would you recommend or advise against ...and why?
108. What are the risks to me and to my child should I become pregnant during treatment ?
109. Will the treatment induce menopause?
110. Will the menopause last only a short while or will it be permanent?
111. Would you recommend hormone replacement therapy in light of my cancer diagnosis?
112. Should my partner and I use birth control measures after treatment is over?
113. For how long? ...and why?
114. If I am able to conceive a child after my treatment is over, will there be any risk to my health?
115. Once my treatment is over, how long would I have to wait before trying to get pregnant?

For Men:

- 116. Is there anything you can do to protect my testicles?
- 117. Is it possible to bank my sperm before starting treatment?
- 118. While I am in treatment, will I still produce sperm?
- 129. Is it necessary for me to use condoms during sexual activity?
- 120. Will I still be able to father children after treatment is finished?

Any other questions you may have.

Chemosensitivity Tests

Personalized cytometric profiling reveals which anti-cancer drugs are effective at killing each patient's cancer cells and which agents are not effective. The most promising drug regimen can be selected for each cancer patient, increasing the odds for treatment success. At the same time, ineffective drugs are avoided. This spares the patient needless exposure to harmful side effects from drugs that can't possibly help them. Further, valuable treatment time is not wasted and the patient does not incur unnecessary costs from expensive but ineffective treatments.

For a list of Laboratories that supply these tests, please see cancerireland.ie

Chronotherapy

The administration of Chemotherapy doses synchronized to the body's circadian rhythm; Chronotherapy may raise allowable doses of chemotherapeutics, and lower tumor burden and chemotherapy-related side effects.

You are the most important member of your healthcare team. Your situation is unique, and your treatment should be developed just for you. You can participate in your care by doing the following:

Be involved in decisions that affect you.

Learn about your cancer and all available treatment options.

Go to all your doctor, clinic and hospital appointments.

Ask your team how to contact them between appointments if you have any questions that need answers quickly.

Talk to your team about your worries or concerns.

