

Information for  
patients and families



# Learning about chemotherapy treatment for patients and families



"Riding the Dragon" A Cancer Journey | by Conrad Furey

## Checklist when coming to the Chemotherapy Suite

- bring your health card
- take your regular medications unless told otherwise
- bring your regular medications, especially your anti-vomiting, pain, diabetic and antismoking medication(s)
- bring a current list of your medications
- wear comfortable clothes
- write down your questions
- bring a book, activity electronic device (tablet/iPad)
- bring food or money to buy lunch
- eat low fat meal
- if the weather is bad (snowstorm/blizzard), call us!
- only 1 healthy visitor over 16 years of age

---

## Table of Contents

	<b>Page</b>
Introduction.....	1
Part 1: Chemotherapy related side effects.....	6
Part 2: Lifestyles and safety .....	25
Part 3: Getting to know the pharmacy services at the JCC.....	32
Evaluation: Tell us what you think about our booklet .....	50

---





---

We understand what a difficult time this is for you. You may have many questions and concerns about chemotherapy. We hope that by reading this book and attending the chemotherapy class your questions are answered and your concerns addressed.

In the book and in the class we discuss chemotherapy related side effects and how to take care of yourself while on chemotherapy. We also present information on pharmacy services and how to prepare for your first appointment.

Notes

## **Take care of yourself**

During treatment is the time when you need to take care of yourself. Listen to your body. You may need to readjust your work and normal routine.

Continue to do your regular activities, as you feel able.

Chemotherapy may cause overall fatigue, so:

- focus on what you can do
- surround yourself with positive people
- ask for help
- keep your ability to laugh
- find out what works best for you

When you come to the JCC for chemotherapy, we encourage you to discuss your concerns with your nurse and/or pharmacist.



## **Nutrition**

### **Benefits of good nutrition**

Good nutrition can help give you strength and energy before, during and after treatment. Good nutrition can also help you:

- heal and recover more quickly
- maintain your weight
- improve how well you handle or tolerate treatment
- decrease your risk of infection

### **A healthy diet is:**

Eating a variety of foods that provide the nutrients needed to maintain your health. These nutrients include:

- protein
- carbohydrates and fats
- vitamins and minerals
- water



## Nutritional issues during active treatment

- Energy balance is the most important goal.
- Maintaining your weight is the best thing you can do.
- Common treatment side effects may prevent you from eating the right amounts of foods.
- Registered Dietitians at the JCC can help you get the most nutrition out of the foods you can eat during chemo. You do not need a referral. Contact Supportive Care, see page 29.

Notes

## Exercise

Your cancer and treatment may cause you to feel fatigued or very tired. You may notice that you just do not have any energy. Most people feel this way when going through chemotherapy and radiation. For some, this lack of energy is very severe and limits what they can do.

We used to think that during chemotherapy and radiation that it was best to rest and not do much exercise or physical activity. We now know that **doing some exercise and keeping physically active can help most patients feel better!**



### **Keeping active during cancer treatment may have these benefits for you:**

- keep or improve your physical abilities
- improve balance, which may lower your risk of falls and broken bones
- better blood flow to legs and lower your risk of blood clots
- less nausea
- more energy, so you have less fatigue
- better weight control
- greater independence around the house



**Overall, keeping active can make you feel better and give you more energy to do the things that you enjoy doing.**

### **Keeping safe**

The goal of your exercise program should be that it is safe, effective and enjoyable. Your ability to be active during and after treatment depends on:

- the type of cancer and treatment that you have
- your level of strength and energy
- your past exercise habits
- your fitness level
- other health conditions that you may have such as heart problems or arthritis





Check with your cancer doctor and treatment team before starting an exercise program.



**Keep in mind that when you are feeling fatigued and have no energy that even doing 10 minutes of exercise can make you feel better!**

**Moderate exercise is defined as any activity that takes as much effort as a brisk walk.**

Notes

## Smoking

If I smoke, should I quit? This is a common question that many patients ask. We recommend that you quit, but realize this is difficult. There are health benefits to you from quitting. Quitting smoking can:

- make your cancer treatments work better
- reduce your side effects
- improve your healing and overall health

If you want to quit, there is a lot of help and support available for you. You may want to talk with your family doctor or pharmacist about quitting and discuss what medications may help you quit.

For support or help to stay smoke-free:

- talk with a member of your health care team
- contact Smokers' Helpline toll free at 1-877-513-5333 or [www.smokershelpline.ca](http://www.smokershelpline.ca)



Notes

## **Part 1:**

# **Chemotherapy related side effects**



## What is chemotherapy?

Chemotherapy is often called chemo. Chemotherapy is using drugs to treat cancer. These drugs attack and destroy cancer cells or prevent their growth. Chemo can also damage normal cells which may cause side effects.

## How is chemotherapy given?

Chemotherapy is usually given:

- In pills – either in a tablet or capsule. You will often hear the words oral medications. This means drugs that you take by mouth and swallow.
- IV – in a vein in your arm or in a special kind of Intravenous catheter called a PICC or Port.
- If you need to have IV chemotherapy at home, the medication is given through a special pump attached to the IV. The pump looks like a baby bottle.
- Sometimes, it is given in a needle in your muscles (IM) or under your skin (SC).

## How long does it take to give chemo in the chemo suite?

The time it takes to give is different for each drug, but usually from 15 minutes to 8 hours.

## How often is chemotherapy given?

Most chemotherapy is given over a period of time. How often chemotherapy is given varies; every day, once a week or once a month.



## Who prepares and gives the chemotherapy?

Specially trained pharmacy technicians prepare the chemotherapy.

Specially trained registered nurses give you your chemotherapy.

## Side effects

There are side effects with having chemotherapy, but not everyone gets all the side effects. You may not get all of them, or you may have a few. Common side effects include:

- low blood counts
  1. infection – low white cell count
  2. fatigue, shortness of breath – low red blood cell count
  3. bruising or bleeding – low platelet count
- nausea and vomiting – sick to your stomach
- hair loss
- mouth or throat discomfort
- constipation
- diarrhea
- changes to skin and nails
- sensitivity to the sun
- runny eyes



Ask your nurse for a copy of this handout and keep it close by:

**“Fever, infection and side effects while on chemotherapy”.**



## Low blood counts

### Infections

**A low white blood cell count** reduces our ability to fight infections. Some patients can develop infections that can make them quite ill. You can die from a severe infection.

Signs of an infection include:

- chills/shaking or feeling unwell: with or without a fever
- a fever of 38°C (100°F) or greater
- unusual sweating
- area of redness, tenderness or swelling
- sore throat along with fever
- cough with yellow or green coloured phlegm/sputum
- burning feeling when urinating
- diarrhea with fever

Common areas of infection:

- IV area
- bladder
- chest



As instructed by your primary team, if you have any of these signs, call your primary team right away or go to the Emergency Department. **Do not wait.**

If you go to Emergency, tell the staff that you are on chemotherapy.

Do not take Tylenol, Aspirin or Ibuprofen. They may hide a fever.

You need to have a thermometer at home. When you are ill, you will be asked “what is your temperature?”



Notes



Notes

**To prevent infection:**

- clean your hands often, especially after using the toilet
- stay away from people who have the flu, colds or contagious diseases
- keep your mouth clean
- wash all fruits and vegetables before eating
- avoid raw meat and fish
- do not share drinking glasses, eating utensils and toothbrushes
- do not use ice from commercial ice machines (hotels, bags from stores, gas stations)
- use rubber gloves if you must clean up after a pet
- wear gloves when gardening

**Fatigue**

Fatigue means that you are very tired and have low energy.

The reasons for fatigue may be:

- A low red blood cell count. Your red blood cells carry iron and oxygen which is why you feel tired when these counts are low.
- Your cancer – cancer may cause your body to become overactive so that it needs more energy.
- Cancer treatments, infections, and surgery make the body use more energy.



- When cancer cells are destroyed by chemotherapy or radiation they release toxic products that can cause fatigue. This results in the body needing more energy to get rid of these toxins.

**With fatigue you may:**

- be short of breath
- have a total lack of energy, be tired/sleepy, weak, worn out and drained
- lack concentration – can't think
- not feel like eating
- feel depressed, bored or discouraged
- lack motivation or interest in social activities or sex

**What to do to help with fatigue:**

- take short 20 to 30 minute rest periods
- ask for help with tasks around the house
- work within your own limits, rest between activities and don't overexert yourself
- exercise, keep active, listen to what your body tells you
- plan nutritious, easy to prepare meals
- eat food high in protein



**Listen to your body – it's a balance between resting, keeping active, working and exercise.**

**Tell your Primary Team about your fatigue – they can offer suggestions and information that will help you manage your symptoms of fatigue.**

Notes



## Bruising or bleeding

Bruising or bleeding is due to a **low blood platelet count**.

Platelets help our bodies clot blood.

### You may notice:

- that you bruise or bleed easily such as bleeding from gums when brushing your teeth
- tiny pinpoint red and purple dots on skin
- unusual or heavy nosebleeds
- red or pink coloured urine
- dizziness, constant headaches or blurred vision
- heavy vaginal bleeding
- black “tar-like” bowel movements
- red or brown coloured sputum or vomit

### To prevent bruising or bleeding:

- do not take medications containing Aspirin, or ASA, unless it is approved by your oncologist. You may need to take aspirin to prevent heart problems or a stroke.
- be very careful with sharp objects such as razors and knives
- use a soft toothbrush to avoid bleeding gums
- use water based lubricants during sexual intercourse
- prevent constipation, try not to strain when having a bowel movement



**If you notice any bruising or bleeding call your Primary Team.**

**If you go to an Emergency Department, tell the staff that you are on chemo.**





## **Nausea and vomiting**

- Not everyone will have nausea and vomiting. It depends on the chemotherapy drug.
- Your oncologist may have discussed the chances of having nausea and vomiting with you.
- Nausea and vomiting can mostly be controlled with medication.
- A pharmacist works with you on how best to take the medication at your first chemo visit or when changed to a new chemo treatment.

### **What you can do to help prevent nausea and vomiting:**

- eat a low-fat meal before treatment
- limit spicy, fried foods and foods with strong smells
- take medication(s) as discussed with your nurse, pharmacist or doctor
  - “regular” medication is taken on a regular schedule
  - “as needed” medication is taken only when needed



Notes

**What may help:**

- relaxation and diversion techniques – things you can do to take your mind off the nausea and vomiting such as resting quietly, watching TV, reading, listening to music or doing yoga
- drink clear fluids
- eat several small meals a day and eat slowly
- relax after eating – remain in a sitting position because this may help you digest your food better
- get some fresh air

**Make sure you:**

- get your anti-vomiting medications prescription filled
- take the medications prescribed by your oncologist



**Call your Primary Team if you continue to have nausea and/or vomiting.**

**If you go to an Emergency Department, tell the staff that you are on chemo.**



## Hair loss

Some chemotherapy treatments may cause some or complete hair loss. You may lose your hair from all parts of your body. Hair loss does not always happen right away. It happens about 2 to 3 weeks after treatment.

There are many things you can do when you lose your hair:

- consider head coverings such as hats, wigs, hair pieces and scarves
- consider “Look Good, Feel Better” workshops
- some people enjoy the freedom of being bald

### **Be gentle with your hair and scalp:**

- avoid perms/hair colouring during your course of chemotherapy
- use mild shampoo such as baby shampoo
- use a soft hair brush or wide tooth comb since the scalp can become sensitive
- avoid use of curling irons, hot curlers, straighteners or blow dryers
- use sunscreen on your scalp



**Keep in mind that your hair will grow back once the chemotherapy has been completed.**



## **Mouth or throat discomfort**

Mouth or throat discomfort may begin 5 to 7 days after treatment begins and usually lasts a few days.

### **One mouth sore can lead to more – call your oncologist!**

To keep your mouth clean and your smile bright:

- brush teeth after meals with a soft toothbrush
- if you have dentures, brush and rinse them after meals and remove them at bedtime
- floss your teeth and gums gently
- rinse your mouth 4 times a day with homemade mouthwash - 1 teaspoon of salt in 8 oz cup of water or 1 teaspoon of baking soda in 8 oz cup of water
- do not use commercial mouthwashes that contain alcohol
- limit spicy, acidic and rough foods – if your mouth is sore or tender, eat soft foods or drink nutritious liquids
- do not drink or eat foods that are very hot or very cold in temperature, let them cool down or warm up
- avoid the use of alcohol or tobacco



### **Dental work**

- Your dentist also has to know that you are on chemotherapy.
- While on chemotherapy, please try to postpone any dental work that may be needed, such as cleaning.

If your counts are too low, problems may happen when you have dental work done. If you need dental care while on chemotherapy, you need to talk with your oncologist.

Your dentist and oncologist need to work together to determine the best time for dental work.

### **For dry mouth**

- Suck on hard, sugar-free candy or chew gum. This may help to make saliva.
- Rinse your mouth often with homemade mouthwash described on page 18.
- You can buy some products to keep your mouth moist called artificial saliva. Check with your Primary Team first.

### **For dry lips**

- Lip balm or some lipsticks may help to keep your lips moist.
- Avoid licking your lips.
- Sun exposure can make cold sores and dry lips worse.



Notes

### **For a sore throat**

- Tell your Primary Team about your sore throat – you may need medication.
- Gargle with baking soda or salt water as recommended.
- If numbing medications are ordered, follow the instructions you are given about eating and drinking.



**Call your Primary Team if you have a sore throat, painful mouth sores, chills or a temperature over 38°C or 100°F.**

**If you go to an Emergency Department, tell the staff that you are on chemo.**

### **Constipation**

Constipation is having to strain or push hard to have a bowel movement. You may notice:

- changes to your regular bowel routine such as no bowel movement for 3 or more days
- stomach ache or cramps, feel bloated, feeling of fullness
- passing gas

Constipation, if not treated, may cause blockage of the bowel.



To prevent and treat constipation:

- eat foods high in fibre
- do not delay the urge for a bowel movement
- drink 8 or more glasses of liquid per day
- regular exercise, remain active
- may need to use laxatives and stool softeners

Notes



**Call your Primary Team if:**

- **you have no bowel movement in 3 days**
- **you observe blood in bowel movement**
- **you have abdominal cramps or pain for 2 or more days**

## Diarrhea

Diarrhea is loose or watery stools 4 or more times a day.

You may also have:

- abdominal cramps, pain, and feel bloated
- diarrhea can cause you to lose too much water and become dehydrated. Being dehydrated can make you very tired.



Notes

If you have diarrhea:

- take diarrhea medication as directed
- eat low fibre food such as the BRAT diet (**B**ananas, **R**ice, **A**pplesauce, **T**oast)
- drink 8 to 12 glasses of clear fluids each day, such as water, bouillon, sport drinks, flat carbonated soda
- limit caffeine

**Call your Primary Team if you:**



- **have 4 or more loose bowel movements daily**
- **observe blood in bowel movements or bleeding from the anal area**
- **have severe abdominal cramps**
- **have diarrhea that lasts longer than 2 days**





## Chemo brain or chemo fog

Chemo brain or chemo fog is a term to describe changes in thinking or memory problems in some patients after they have chemotherapy.

Many of these last from a few months to a few years.

### Common complaints are:

- short-term memory lapses
- forgetting where you put something or what you were going to buy at the store
- difficulty finding the right word in a conversation
- difficulty multi-tasking both at home and work
- taking more time to learn new things
- taking longer to do the tasks you once did

### How to help yourself if you have chemo brain or chemo fog:

- talk with your doctor if you have mental changes as there may be other causes including stress or other medications – there may be medications available to help
- make notes of things you need to do or activities you need to attend
- keep to a set routine
- learn relaxation techniques – exercising your mind and body will help you cope if you experience “chemo brain” or “brain fog”. Social Work in Supportive Care may be able to help you with this.



Please see our booklet on: “**Cancer-related brain fog**”. You can find it in our Patient and Family Resource Centre or online:

<http://www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/documents/Patient%20Education/BrainFogCancerRelatedPORTRAIT-th.pdf>



## Changes to skin and nails

Chemotherapy may cause changes to your skin and nails.

### What you may notice:

- skin may become dry, cracked and more sensitive to sunlight
- the skin on your hands and feet is thinner and red, or you may have numbness or tingling in your fingers and toes
- your finger and toe nails may also change in texture and colour. The nails could become infected or lift off.

### What you can do:

- regular use of moisturizing lotion or cream
- wear loose comfortable clothing (cotton fabrics rather than synthetic material such as polyester) and footwear
- protect your skin from direct sun exposure
- maintain gentle care of your nails
- depending on your treatment, the nurses may provide you with cold gel gloves and/or slippers to protect your fingernails and toenails



## Sun sensitivity --- cover up!

Some chemotherapy treatments may cause you to have increased sensitivity to the sun. This means that the sun can damage and burn your skin and hurt your eyes.

To prevent damage:

- use a sunscreen with a SPF 30 or higher
- cover up when outdoors
- wear a wide brimmed hat
- wear sunglasses with Ultra Violet (UV) protection



**Call your Primary Team if you develop a severe rash or burn.**

Notes



Notes

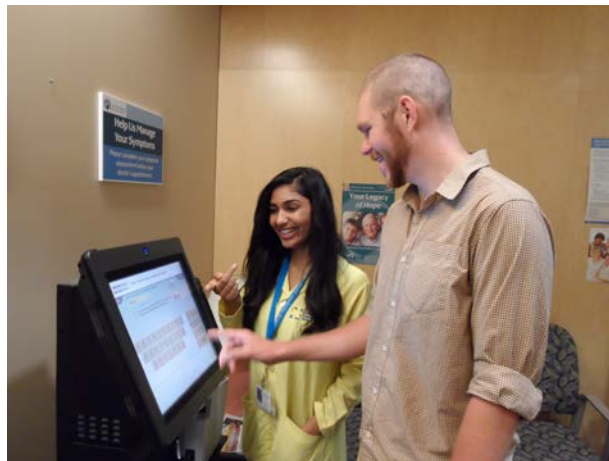
## Symptom Assessment – Help Us Help You

Before each of your doctor appointments, please complete a Symptom Assessment. You will be asked to rate different symptoms about how you are feeling along with your activity level. You can complete the Symptom Assessment at home online <https://isaac.cancercare.on.ca> or on a touch screen computer at the JCC.

There are computers in the lobby and in the clinics.

Step-by-step instructions are posted at each touch screen computer. A volunteer is available to help you at our lobby kiosks.

By completing a Symptom Assessment you will help us understand how you are feeling. Together we can discuss what you need help with most and offer help.





Notes

## **Part 2:**

# **Lifestyles and safety**



Notes

## Sexuality

- You may notice a change in your sexual needs or response.
- A decrease in desire is common.
  - Talk about it – with your partner or with us!
  - Your periods may stop – early menopause (hot flashes, mood swings, vaginal dryness)

Talk with your oncologist about future pregnancies and family planning.

Pregnancy must be avoided during and for several months after completion of treatment. Use condoms while either partner is receiving chemotherapy.

Chemotherapy may cause:

- decreased sperm count – consider sperm banking
- premature menopause – hot flashes, mood swings, vaginal dryness

If you have any questions about your sexuality, please ask us or call Supportive Care, ext. 64315.

## Alcohol

Do not drink on the day of your treatment. Alcohol may make your side effects worse. Alcohol may also interact with the way some medications work. Talk with your oncologist about alcohol and drinking during your treatment.



## Safety in the Chemotherapy Suite

- ✓ The nurses wear gown and gloves when giving chemotherapy.
- ✓ For patient safety and identification, you will be given a wristband when you come to the chemo suite for treatment. This wristband is checked often.
- ✓ Do not touch any equipment, including chemotherapy bags and IV pumps.
- ✓ Clean your hands.
- ✓ You cannot leave the chemo suite, until your chemo is done.

### Washrooms

- ✓ Please use the washrooms for patients only. Men are required to sit down when urinating. This helps to avoid splashing of urine that contains chemotherapy.
- ✓ If you have an accident in the washroom with urine or stool spilling outside the toilet, please tell your nurse to ensure proper cleaning.

### Cell phones

Please put all cell phones to vibrate. Texting is allowed.

Please refrain from talking on cell phones in the chemo suite.

Land lines are available for phone calls.

### Visitors

- Visitors must be feeling well – no fevers, cough or flu symptoms.
- **Only 1 visitor can be with a patient in the chemo suite.**
- Children under the age of 16 are not permitted into the chemo suite.
- Visitors, no eating, drinking or chewing gum.
- Please only use the visitor washrooms.



Notes

## Safety at home

For 7 days after being given chemotherapy, wear gloves and keep soiled items from touching you when cleaning up:

- body fluids such as urine, vomit, bowel movement, diarrhea
- linens or bed sheets soiled with body fluids
- accidental spills such as chemotherapy from an infusion pump

**Soiled linens** – Wash soiled articles separately in your washing machine twice, in hot water with regular detergent. If not soiled, they may be washed with the regular laundry.

**Accidental spills with your IV pump** – call home care or your Primary Team. You may be provided with a chemo spill kit by your home care nurse.

**Rinsing bedpans or basins** – Wear 2 pairs of disposable gloves when emptying used bedpans or containers. Avoid splashing while emptying into the toilet. Rinse well with detergent and water, and put rinse water in the toilet. Close the lid and flush the toilet 2 times.

**Toilet** – Close the lid and flush the toilet 2 times after using. Wash your hands with soap and water. Men should sit down when urinating to avoid splashing of urine that contains chemotherapy. As long as any chemo waste is cleaned from the toilet, sharing is safe.





## Supportive Care

We have many supportive care services that are here to help you.

These include:

- Social Work
- Dietitians
- Mental Health Services (referral needed)
- Chaplaincy
- Aboriginal Patient Care Navigator
- Pain and Symptom Management (referral needed)

Most services do not need a referral. Supportive Care is on the 2<sup>nd</sup> level at the JCC.

You can reach Supportive Care Services at ext. 64315.

We also have a:

- Patient and Family Resource Centre
- Retail Pharmacy
- Hummingbird Cafe

Notes



## Emergencies

### You need to call 911 if you are:

- having sudden change with breathing – harder to breathe
- having chest pain that you have not had before
- feeling that your “throat is closing up”
- vomiting blood



**Infections and bleeding are emergencies.  
Call your oncologist or go to the  
Emergency Department.**

If you have health concerns and do not know what to do,  
call your oncologist.

Call you oncologist between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm,  
Monday to Friday.

After hours call your family doctor or go to the Emergency  
Department.

### **Provide the Emergency Department with this information**

(complete the chart on the next page):

- you have cancer and are currently receiving chemotherapy
- name of your oncologist
- date of last treatment
- current list of all medication, including chemotherapy drugs
- clinical trial patients – bring a copy of your consent



## My important information

My name	
My oncology team - Oncology doctor - Oncology nurse	
My type of cancer	
The names of my chemotherapy drugs.  Bring in your current medication list.	
When was your last treatment?	
Do you have your consent form, if you are on a clinical trial?	

Notes



Notes

## Part 3:

# Getting to know the pharmacy services at the JCC

- **Chemotherapy suite area**
- **JCC Retail Pharmacy**
  - Located on the 2nd level of the JCC, close to the main elevators.
  - Hours:
    - Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
    - Closed on weekends and statutory holidays
  - Phone: 905-575-6320

JCC pharmacy staff are experts in oncology treatments and medications. Please ask us your questions.



## Chemotherapy Suite area

Notes

### Pharmacists are available to:

- review your chemo orders
- review your lab results and side effects, if any
- review with you at your first treatment how to take your anti-vomiting pills, if prescribed



**Anti-vomiting pills = nausea pills**

### Chemotherapy suite appointment – what does it mean?

If your appointment time is at 11 am, you need to be at the chemo suite at this time. But, before you start chemo, things need to be done.

- blood work is checked (from your earlier lab appointment)
- chemo order is checked
- the chemo is prepared
- a pharmacist may talk with you

### At your **FIRST** chemo appointment, a pharmacist:

- will find you after you have checked in
- will review your anti-vomiting medication plan (if needed) with you
- will give you a medication calendar to take home



**Very important to have the anti-vomiting medication prescriptions filled:**

- at least a day before you start chemo, and
- to bring them with you at each visit

**Refills**

- Please call your pharmacy for refills at least the day before each chemotherapy cycle and pick them up before your next chemotherapy cycle. Take as directed.
- At the JCC retail pharmacy, you can call for your refills at least the day before chemo and pick them up on the day of chemo. Take as directed.

**Taking anti-vomiting medication**

- Bring your prescribed anti-vomiting medication(s) with you at each chemo appointment
- Take these medication(s) before chemo as directed, 2 options:
  1. Take after you have checked in at the reception desk
  2. Take after you see the pharmacist

Names of some anti-vomiting medication: Ondansetron, Granisetron, Aprepitant, Dexamethasone or Prochlorperazine.



**Note:** It is also important to have your prescription filled for the prescribed medications that prevent reactions to certain chemotherapy drugs. Take the drugs as directed before chemotherapy.

**Option 1: For most chemotherapy appointments**

- Check in at the chemo suite reception.
- Take your anti-vomiting medication(s).
- Note the time and tell your nurse when you are in the chemo suite.

**Option 2: Exception**

- If you need to have blood work done before your chemo, and you have no appointment with your oncologist.
- Wait for the pharmacist to review with you when to take your anti-vomiting medication(s).

**The pharmacist will review:**

- your lab results, and
- any side effects you may have.

If ok, then take your anti-vomiting medication(s) as prescribed.

Notes



Notes

### **At each chemotherapy treatment**



- **Bring your prescribed anti-vomiting medications.**
- **Bring your other pills that you will need to take for the day while you are here at the Cancer Centre. These may include your regular pain pills, diabetes pills or heart pills.**

### **Where can I get my prescriptions filled?**

- At any pharmacy
- JCC Retail Pharmacy
  1. Specializes in the care of cancer patients – we are experts in cancer care.
  2. Staff can transfer refills after you have made arrangements with your home pharmacy.
    - Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
    - Closed on weekends and statutory holidays.





## Pharmacy services – JCC Retail Pharmacy

- Where you can fill your take home pills needed for cancer treatment.
- Where you can drop off your study prescription and pick up your study pills, if you are participating in a study.

### Your oncologist may prescribe:

- Pills to help with side effects such as:
  - Ondansetron to prevent vomiting
  - Nystatin for mouth sores
  - Loperamide for diarrhea
- Cancer pills such as:
  - Imatinib for blood cancer
  - Erlotinib for lung cancer
- Pain pills such as:
  - Morphine
  - Tylenol #3
  - Dilaudid
- Injections: hormonal injections for prostate cancer
- Others

These medications may not be easily found at your home pharmacy.

Notes



## Allergies

Tell us if you have any allergies:

- with medications such as penicillin, sulpha drugs, and
- the type of reactions such as a rash or shortness of breath that you have had.

## Medication history

Carry a current list of all the medications you take:

- regular prescriptions
- over-the-counter medications
- vitamins, herbals or alternative treatments
- cancer treatment, including chemotherapy and anti-vomiting medications, and others that are prescribed for you
- study medications



**You can get a current list from your home pharmacy through the MedsCheck program.**

## Why does the pharmacist need a list of my medications?

- Pharmacist will review all your medications including vitamins and herbals to avoid interactions with your chemotherapy drugs.



### **Alternative medications and herbals**

It is important that you discuss this issue with your oncologist or pharmacist before you start your chemotherapy.

These products may:

- interact with your chemotherapy medication(s), such as St. John's Wort, grapefruit and grapefruit juice
- prevent your treatment from achieving the desired effect
- increase side effects
- cause new side effects

### **Regular medications**

- Continue to take your regular medications as prescribed and approved by your oncologist.
- Very important to tell your oncologist if there has been a change in the medications that you take at home.
- We want to make sure there are no problems between the medications that you take for your cancer treatment and your regular medications.

### **Changes with your medications**

- If you are using the JCC Retail Pharmacy for your prescriptions, it is very important to tell the pharmacist when there are changes in your pills from your home pharmacy.
- We want to make sure there are no problems between the pills that we give you and the pills that you get from your home pharmacy.



### **Paying for medications**

Most chemotherapy drugs that are given in the chemo suite are covered by provincial funding.

### **Paying for take home medications**

When you come to the JCC Retail Pharmacy:

- bring your drug insurance information
- bring your OHIP card
- bring some form of payment (cash, debit or credit card)
- if you do not have drug coverage, talk with your Oncology Team – a referral may be made to the Drug Access Facilitators to help you explore possible options

### **Study participants**

If you are participating in a research study:

- Drop off your study prescription at the JCC Retail Pharmacy.
- Designated study pharmacy staff will process the prescription and dispense the study pills.
- Pick up your study pills from the retail pharmacy.
- This process may take about 30 minutes. Sometimes pharmacy staff may drop off the study pills to you while you are in the chemo suite.



## New patient questionnaire (Pharmacy)

Please complete this information and bring it to the Cancer Centre Pharmacy the first time you come with your prescription. You also need to bring your Ontario Health Insurance Card and any drug cards that you may have.

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_

Medication allergies:       Yes       No

If yes, please list the medication name(s) and the type of reaction:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Medical conditions:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> diabetes       | <input type="checkbox"/> liver disease |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hypertension   | <input type="checkbox"/> arthritis     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> heart disease  | <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> kidney disease |  |

Notes



Notes

Prescription medications that you take at home or attach printout (MedsCheck list) from pharmacy:

Name	Amount (Dose)	When you take it

Non-prescription medications:

- Tylenol®
- Advil®
- Aspirin®
- Graval®
- Imodium®
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Vitamins, herbals and supplements:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of your home pharmacy:

\_\_\_\_\_

Can we phone your home pharmacy for information?

- Yes
- No

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_



## **Insurance information**

You may need to phone your insurance providers to get the answers to the questions listed in the box below.

This will let you know whether you have enough coverage to meet your needs during your treatment.

If your family has more than one insurance plan, please bring each drug card to the pharmacy.

### **Primary insurance**

The insurance company that is contacted first to obtain coverage for you.

### **Secondary insurance**

The insurance company that is contacted second to obtain coverage. The secondary coverage may cover the balance of what the primary insurance did not cover.

Notes



Notes

	Primary Insurance		Secondary Insurance	
Name of insurance company				
Percent coverage	_____%		_____%	
Deductible	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Amount of deductible	\$		\$	
Yearly maximum	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Amount of yearly maximum	\$		\$	
Lifetime cap	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Amount of lifetime cap	\$		\$	
Pre-approval needed for some medications	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

**Employee benefit plan**

Your employer may offer medical coverage on a benefit plan.  
 If so, please bring your drug card to the pharmacy on your first visit.  
 Some coverage may be processed on-line.





You may need to call your insurance provider and ask:

- How much coverage you have for medications, is there a yearly or lifetime maximum?
- Whether a specific medication that your oncologist wants to prescribe for you is covered. Also, ask if you need a doctor's note for approval.

### **Ontario Drug Benefits**

If you are 65 years or older, you are eligible for drug benefits under the government plan called The Ontario Drug Benefits Program. Some patients on home care, social assistance and disability are also eligible for this government program. You may also be eligible for drug coverage through the Provincial Trillium Program.

If you are eligible for Ontario Drug Benefits or the Trillium Program, you need to present your benefit card and/or your Ontario Health Insurance Card to a pharmacy staff member on your first visit.

You may have to pay a fee or deductible that is not covered by the insurance provider. This can be paid for using cash, debit card, VISA, MasterCard, American Express or a cheque.

Notes



Notes

## Pharmacy resources

- Cancer Care Ontario: <http://www.cancercare.on.ca>
- Medication Information Sheets can be found on the Juravinski Cancer Centre website: <http://www.jcc.hhsc.ca>

Then go to > Cancer Services > Pharmacy  
> Medical Information Sheets

- Information about alternative and complementary treatments can be found at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Centre or BC Cancer agency website:  
[www.mskcc.org](http://www.mskcc.org)

Then go to > Cancer Information > Integrative Medicine  
> About Herbs, Botanicals & Other Products

[www.bccancer.bc.ca](http://www.bccancer.bc.ca)

Then go to > Patients/Public Information  
> Complementary Therapies

## Support services

### **Patient and Family Resource Center**

Staff and volunteers are here to help you search for the information you need. We are in the lobby of the JCC.

Phone: 905-387-9495, ext. 65109

Email: [jccpfrcentre@hhsc.ca](mailto:jccpfrcentre@hhsc.ca)



## **Canadian Cancer Society**

We help you make informed decisions about your health by providing trusted, reliable information on all types of cancer. We offer a range of support services in your area, such as volunteer drivers. Our volunteers wear yellow jackets.

Website: [www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca)

## **Wellwood Resource Centre of Hamilton**

Wellwood is a community based, non-profit organization which provides information, supportive care programs and peer support to people who have received a diagnosis of cancer, their families and health providers.

Email: [wellwood@hpsc.ca](mailto:wellwood@hpsc.ca)

Phone: 905-389-5884

## **Durand Residence**

The JCC has a limited number of rooms for patients to stay overnight at the Durand Residence located in Hamilton. These rooms are available to patients receiving cancer treatment who:

- are independent in their daily activities
- live greater than 50kms from the Cancer Centre

For more information, please ask your Health Care Team or go to [www.jcc.hpsc.ca](http://www.jcc.hpsc.ca) and in the search box type in Durand Residence.

## **Canwell Program, Hamilton, Ontario**

This is an exercise and education program for people who have cancer.

Phone: 905-667-1515

[www.canwellprogram.ca](http://www.canwellprogram.ca)



### **Look Good ... Feel Better Workshops**

A national program to help women living with cancer improve their appearance and self esteem. This is done by teaching beauty tips to hide appearance related changes of illness, chemotherapy and radiation. One afternoon or an evening. You need to call for an appointment.

Phone: 905 575 9220, ext. 3110

### **Cancer Assistance Program**

A community-based volunteer organization with a commitment to helping cancer patients and their families through the crisis of cancer and to preventative education programs.

Phone: 905-383-9797

### **Wellspring – Halton/Peel and Niagara**

At Wellspring, programs provide people with many ways to help with coping with the diagnosis, the disease and its effects on patients, family members and professionals.

Phone: 1-888-707-1277

### **Specialty stores**

- wigs and hair pieces
- breast prosthesis and bras
- check the Internet and/ or yellow pages





## Tell us what you think about our booklet!

After reading the booklet on **Chemotherapy** please answer the following statements. Your answers and comments will help us improve the information.

Circle the number that best describes how you agree with the statement.  
On a scale from 1 to 5, with 1= strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

Statement	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
The information was helpful.	1	2	3	4	5
I would recommend this information to other patients.	1	2	3	4	5
I have a better understanding of the side effects related to chemotherapy.	1	2	3	4	5
I know to always carry a current medication list with me.	1	2	3	4	5
The information answered my questions.	1	2	3	4	5
The words and sentences were easy to read.	1	2	3	4	5
The information is understandable.	1	2	3	4	5

I would like more information about:

---



---

I would like less information about:

---



---

Comments:

---



---

**Please return this survey to the reception area in the chemo suite.**

**Thank-you! JCC 2015**