

Taking your anticancer drugs at home

Information for patients and families

When you come to the JCC for your appointments, we encourage you to discuss your concerns with your Primary Team and/or pharmacist.



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

Successful ways for taking your anticancer drugs at home.

To keep on track, use helpful reminders

- Smart phone
- Diary or journal
- Calendar
- Separate dosette or container just for your anticancer pills

Plan ahead

- If you plan to travel, talk with your Primary Team
- Get your drugs refilled before you run out

Ask us

- If you are unsure about how to take your medications
- If you do not understand why you are taking this type of medication

Let us know how you are feeling: Symptom assessment

- Is a set of questions about how you are feeling and your activity level.
- Will help us understand how you are feeling.
- Complete before each doctor's appointment.



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We understand what a difficult time this is for you. You may have many questions and concerns about taking your anticancer drugs at home. We hope that by reading this book and attending the class on anticancer drugs, your questions and concerns are addressed.

Taking your anticancer drugs as prescribed may be challenging. Forgetting or missing your anticancer pills can lead to the disease coming back or getting worse. Please ask us about helpful ways to remember to take your pills.

In the book and in the class we discuss anticancer drugs, related side effects, how to take care of yourself while on treatment and pharmacy services.



Blood work, tests and clinic visits are all a part of your cancer treatment. Your Primary Team will review your overall plan with you.

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. Anticancer drugs 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



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 treatment. You do not need a referral. Contact Supportive Care, see page 34.

Notes

Exercise

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

We used to think that during anticancer treatment 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!**



Notes

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 Primary 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



Notes



Notes

Part 1:

Anticancer drugs and related side effects



What are oral anticancer drugs?

Oral anticancer treatment is using drugs to treat cancer. These drugs attack and destroy cancer cells or prevent their growth. Oral anticancer drugs can also damage normal cells. Oral anticancer drugs are taken in a pill form by mouth and swallowed. The pill moves through the digestive system into the blood stream and travels throughout the body.

These drugs may be chemotherapy or biologic therapy.

What is chemotherapy?

Chemotherapy is often called chemo. Many different drugs are available as chemotherapy. These drugs can be used alone or in combination to treat a wide variety of cancers.

Chemotherapy is a treatment using anticancer (also known as cytotoxic) drugs which aim to destroy cancer cells. They may:

- stop cancer cells from dividing and growing by interrupting the cell cycle
- make cancer cells less able to grow and spread

What is biologic therapy?

Biologic therapies are treatments that act on processes in cells.

They may:

- stop cancer cells from dividing and growing
- seek out cancer cells and kill them
- encourage the immune system to attack cancer cells



Notes

How is anticancer treatment given?

Anticancer treatment is usually given:

- In pills – either in a tablet or capsule.
- Into your vein. This is called an intravenous or through the IV. 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 often is treatment?

Most anticancer treatments are given over a period of time.

How often can vary; every day, once a week or once a month.

The length of treatment varies. It depends on the type of cancer and the type of treatment.



How do I keep on track with taking my pills?

- Take your anticancer pills the right way! Patients that take their anticancer pills do better than those who do not. Forgetting or missing your anticancer pills can lead to the disease coming back or getting worse.
- Use a drug dosette JUST for your anticancer pills.
- There are many ways to keep on track – a journal, calendar or smartphone to keep on track. Use what is right for you! Your pharmacist or Primary Team can provide suggestions as well.



Travelling: plan ahead

- Talk with your Primary Team before travelling.
- Carry a current list of all the drugs you take.
- Talk with your doctor before you get a flu shot or other immunization.
- Tell other doctors, dentists and health care workers you see for treatment that you are on anticancer drugs.



How do I safely handle my anticancer pills?

- When taking your anticancer pills it is important to wash your hands before and after taking your medication.
- If your pills are supplied in a bottle, you can tap the pill into the bottle cap and take the pill. Do this over a table, to prevent the pill from falling on the floor.
- If you are filling a dosette ensure it is dedicated ONLY for your anticancer pills. Wash your hands before and after filling the daily compartments as prescribed.
- If someone else gives you your anticancer pills, they should wear disposable gloves, then discard the gloves in a plastic trash bag and wash their hands.

What if I can't swallow my pill or vomit?

- Swallow your pill whole. Do not cut or crush.
- If you can't swallow, please let your Primary Team know.
- If you vomit right after taking the anticancer pill, do not take another pill.
- Call your Primary Team to find out what you should do.

What do I do if I miss a pill?

- If you miss taking a pill, take it as soon as possible.
- If it is almost time for your next dose, then do not take the missed dose, just your usual dose.
- Take your normal anticancer pill dose at the normal time.
- If you miss a dose, make a note on your calendar. Let your Primary Team know what you missed at your next visit.



Where should I keep my pills?

- Do not store your anticancer pills with your regular medications.
- Keep your anticancer pills and all medications out of the reach of children and pets.
- Bring unused anticancer pills back to the Cancer Centre in a double sealed bag or pill bottle. You can also check with your local pharmacy and bring them there.

In case of accidental pill taking:

- Call POISON CONTROL CENTRE at: 1-800-268-9017
- Put the number in your cell phone contacts and put the number on your fridge!



When is it important to go to the Emergency Department?

- When your temperature is 38°C or greater and your Primary Team is unavailable to speak with you when you call. This may be on evenings, weekends and holidays.



Notes

Side effects

There are side effects with taking anticancer drugs, but not everyone gets all the side effects. You may get some, a few or none of the side effects.

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



Low blood counts

Infections

A low white blood cell count reduces your ability to fight infections. Some patients can develop infections that can make them quite ill. You can die from a severe infection. Infections can usually be treated with antibiotics.

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

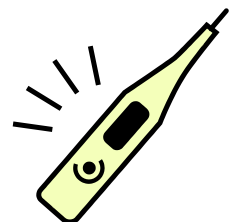
Common areas of infection include the bladder and chest.

If you have any signs of an infection, call your Primary Team right away.



If you go to an Emergency Department, tell the staff that you are on anticancer drugs.

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





To prevent infection:

- clean your hands often, especially after using the toilet
- stay away from people who have the flu, colds or contagious diseases
- ask friends or family not to visit if they are feeling unwell
- keep your mouth clean by brushing your teeth and rinsing after meals
- 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

Notes

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.
- Anticancer drugs, infections and surgery make the body use more energy.



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- When cancer cells are destroyed by anticancer drugs 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.



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 anticancer drugs.

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Common symptoms of a blood clot in the leg

- Pain in the calf or leg muscle, most often one leg which worsens when you tip your toe toward the ceiling.
- Swelling.
- Tenderness.
- Changes in your skin color around the clot area, such as turning pale, red or blue.
- Area around the clot may feel warm to touch.

All, one, or none of these symptoms may be present.

Common signs of a blood clot in the lung

- The pain is sharp and worsens when taking a deep breath.

What to do if you think you have a blood clot



- DO NOT WAIT, you should be seen right away by your doctor or emergency room.
- If you are unsure of your symptoms, call your Primary Team.



Some Biologics can cause high blood pressure

- Axitinib, Pazopanib, Sunitinib, Sorafenib and Regorafenib are some of the drugs that can cause high blood pressure.
- High blood pressure = 150/100 mmHg.
Check your blood pressure (BP) at your local pharmacy once a week or at home if you have a BP cuff. Write it down!
- To make sure that your home BP cuff is accurate bring it to a clinic appointment and ask your nurse to check it.
- If your blood pressure top number is 150 or greater or bottom number is 100 or greater- call your Primary Team!

Nausea and vomiting

- Not everyone will have nausea and vomiting. It depends on the anticancer drug.
- Your oncologist may have discussed the chances of having nausea and vomiting with you.
- Nausea and vomiting can mostly be controlled with medication.

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



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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 anticancer drugs.



Hair loss

Some anticancer drugs 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 or 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 anticancer treatment
- 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 anticancer treatment has been completed.

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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 Primary Team!

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
- your Primary Team can prescribe a special preparation for mouth sores, so if your mouth is sore and worsening let your team know



Dental work

- Your dentist also has to know that you are on anticancer drugs.
- While on anticancer drugs, 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 anticancer drugs, 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 and relieve some mouth dryness.
- Rinse your mouth often with homemade mouthwash described on page 22.
- 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.

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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 of 38°C (100°F) or higher.

If you go to an Emergency Department, tell the staff that you are on anticancer drugs.

Constipation

Constipation is when you have to strain or push hard to have a bowel movement. What you may notice:

- changes to your regular bowel routine such as no bowel movement for 3 or more days
- stomachache 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

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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 or 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 anticancer treatment.

Many of these changes may 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 “chemo fog”. Social Work in Supportive Care may be able to help you with this.



Changes to skin and nails

Anticancer treatment 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.
- skin redness and rash

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
- a prescription for a cream may be given from your Primary Team for the rash



Hand and Foot Syndrome: Chemo or Biologic Anticancer Drugs

Some pills such as Capecitabine, Axitinib, Sunitinib, Sorafenib and Regorafenib can cause hand and foot syndrome:

- dry skin
- redness
- numbness

What can help:

- Immerse and cover your entire hands and feet in cool water.
- Avoid extremes of temperature, pressure and friction (rubbing) on the skin.
- Speak with your Primary Team for advice!

Rash: Biologic Anticancer Drugs

Some anticancer biologic pills can cause an acneiform rash:

- dry skin
- redness
- acne-like bumps

What can help:

- Special creams prescribed by your Oncologist
- Do not use acne products –too drying to the skin
- Speak with your Primary Team for advice!



Notes

Sun sensitivity --- cover up!

Some anticancer drugs 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

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 anticancer treatment.

Anticancer treatment 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.



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 drinking alcohol during your treatment.

Safety at home

For 7 days after taking anticancer drugs, wear gloves and keep soiled items from touching you when cleaning up:

- body fluids such as urine, vomit, bowel movement or diarrhea
- linens or bed sheets soiled with body fluids

Soiled linens – wash separately with hot water and detergent.

Rinsing bedpans or basins – wear gloves and rinse very carefully.

Toilet – double flush toilets while on anticancer treatment.

Visitors

- Visitors must be feeling well – no fevers, cough or flu symptoms.



Notes

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 2nd level at the JCC.

You can reach Supportive Care Services at 905-387-9495, ext. 64315.

We also have:

- Volunteers from the Canadian Cancer Society
- A Patient and Family Resource Centre, lobby of the JCC
- A Retail Pharmacy, 2nd level JCC
- Cafeterias at the Juravinski Hospital and Cancer Centre



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 Primary Team and go to the
Emergency Department.**

If you have other health concerns and do not know what to do, call your Primary Team. Call 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 anticancer drugs
- name of your oncologist, primary care nurse
- date of last treatment
- current list of all medication, including anticancer drugs
- clinical trial patients – bring a copy of your consent

Notes



Notes

My important information

My name

My oncology team

- Oncology doctor
- Oncology nurse

My type of cancer

The names of my anticancer 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?



Part 3:

Getting to know the pharmacy services at the JCC

- Located on the 2nd level of the JCC, close to the main elevators.
- Hours:
 - Monday to Friday, 8:00 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.



JCC Pharmacy services

Where can I get my prescriptions filled?

- At the JCC Retail Pharmacy we are experts in cancer care. We can provide you with your anticancer drugs and any other take home pills for cancer treatment.
- These medications may be hard to find at your home pharmacy. Staff can transfer refills after you have made arrangements with your home pharmacy.
- If you are participating in a research study, you get your study prescription filled at the JCC.
- The JCC Pharmacy can also fill prescriptions for your non-cancer related medications.

Refills of anticancer drugs

- At the JCC retail pharmacy, please call for your refills at least a few days before running out of anticancer pills and pick them up before running out. Take as directed.
- If using your local pharmacy call for refills at least the day before each anticancer treatment cycle and pick them up before your next cycle begins. Take as directed.

Anti-vomiting pills or drugs to prevent a reaction

- If you are prescribed anti-vomiting pills (nausea pills) or drugs to prevent reactions please have the prescriptions filled at least a day before you start taking your anticancer drugs.



Your oncologist may prescribe:

- Medications to help with side effects such as:
 - Ondansetron pills to prevent nausea and vomiting
 - Nystatin special prescription for mouth sores
 - Loperamide pills for diarrhea
- Anticancer pills such as:
 - Imatinib for blood cancer
 - Erlotinib or Gefitinib 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.

Allergies

Tell us if you have any allergies:

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

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Notes

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 anticancer pills 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 anticancer drugs.



Alternative medications and herbals

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

These products may:

- interact with your anticancer 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 aren't any problems between the medications that you take for your cancer treatment and your regular medications.

Changes with your medications

- If you are using the Cancer Centre 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.



Notes

Paying for anticancer medications

When you come to the 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 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.



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 | |

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

Name	Amount (Dose)	When you take it

Non-prescription medications:

- Acetaminophen Tylenol®
- Ibuprofen Advil®
- Acetylsalicylic acid Aspirin®
- Dimenhydrinate Gravol®
- Loperamide 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.

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

www.bccancer.bc.ca
Then go to > Patients/Public Information
> Complementary Therapies

Support services

Patient and Family Resource Centre

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@jcc.hhsc.ca



You can also find us on Facebook!

www.facebook.com/JCCPFRC



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

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@hhsc.ca

Phone: 905-389-5884

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, anticancer drugs and radiation. One afternoon or an evening. You need to call for an appointment.

Phone: 905-575-9220, ext. 3110

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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

Specialty stores

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

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

Canwell Program, Hamilton, Ontario

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




Phone: 905-667-1515

www.canwellprogram.ca

Tell us what you think about our booklet!

After reading the booklet on **Anticancer drugs** please respond to each statement. Your responses 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.

	Strongly disagree 				Strongly agree 
The information was helpful.	1	2	3	4	5
I would recommend this information to other patients on oral anticancer therapy.	1	2	3	4	5
I learned a way to help me to remember to take my drugs the right way.	1	2	3	4	5
I have a better understanding of the side effects related to anticancer drugs.	1	2	3	4	5
I know when it is important to call my Primary Team or talk with a pharmacist.	1	2	3	4	5
The information answered my questions.	1	2	3	4	5
The words and sentences were clear and understandable.	1	2	3	4	5

What would you add to this class to improve it to better meet your needs as a new patient starting oral anticancer treatment?

If you attended the class on anticancer drugs, please respond to the statements on page 54.

Please return this survey in the self-addressed envelope.
Thank-you! JCC 2015

Statement	Strongly disagree 				Strongly agree 
The class was helpful.	1	2	3	4	5
I would recommend the class to patients and families.	1	2	3	4	5
What I learned in class helped me take my drugs the right way.	1	2	3	4	5

What advice do you have that would help other patients and families currently going through cancer treatments?

**Front Mural: "Riding the Dragon"
by Conrad Furey**

Riding the Dragon is a 30 foot mural created in 2006 by renowned Hamilton Artist Conrad Furey. The images in the mural reflect Conrad's personal experience with cancer, his valued relationships with the staff who cared for him, and pays special tribute to the Knot-a-Breast dragon boat team. The mural hangs in the atrium of the cancer centre and provides, comfort and reflection to patients, staff and visitors.



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