

The Chemotherapy Experience

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Chemotherapy Overview

Many people have heard horror stories about chemotherapy. Recent progress has made chemotherapy side effects very minimal.

What is Chemotherapy?

- Chemotherapy is chemical therapy
- Drugs are used to kill cancer
- Therapy is based upon type of cancer, how advanced it is, and your health status
- It is often used with radiation or surgery

How is it Administered?

- Drugs are given in cycles
- Sometimes they are given daily for a period of several days
- The number of cycles will depend upon the treatment plan

How is Treatment Scheduled?

- The doctor and oncology nurse will develop a treatment plan

- Doctors will advise you on how to avoid side effects
- Your treatment plan is like a road map
- It may be helpful to keep a treatment diary to share with your health-care team

Side Effects

- Chemotherapy drugs can't tell the difference between a cancer cell and a healthy cell
- Side effects occur when healthy cells are destroyed
- You may experience no side effects or just a few
- Normal cells recover when chemotherapy is over
- Common side effects include hair loss, fatigue, anemia, nausea, vomiting or infection

Getting the Best Outcome

- Experience has shown that patients who fare the best are those who:
 - *Follow their treatment plan*
 - *Use support services*
 - *Provide feedback to their doctors*