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