

# Chemotherapy Before, During, and After

## A patient planning worksheet



Remember that every person's lung cancer and treatment plan can vary. Consult with your doctor about your treatment plan and what you might expect.

### What to expect **before** treatment

Before starting chemo, your doctor will explain the type of chemotherapy drugs that will be used and put together a treatment schedule that's best for you. It is important to make sure you understand your insurance coverage, and any co-pay amounts that will be required.

Chemo is often given in cycles, so you may have a few weeks of treatment followed by a break to let your body rest. Your doctor will also advise you on what to eat and drink before treatment. Chemo is often accompanied by side effects so medication might be recommended to help. **This is also a good time to talk with your doctor about a plan for managing any side effects you might experience. This type of care is sometimes called palliative, or supportive care, because it is focused on helping to ease possible discomfort from lung cancer treatment.**

There are many things you might do to prepare for treatment. Ask your doctor if you should consider a dental appointment, as sometimes chemo can cause mouth sores or dry mouth. Another common side effect may be fatigue. Once you know your treatment schedule, arrange for help with transportation, other errands and make accommodations at your place of employment for needed time off. Sometimes this may be covered under short term disability or Family Medical Leave.

Your comfort is important during chemo. Find out what is provided for you in the treatment room before you get there like blankets, WiFi and television. Ask if you can bring a friend or family member with you.

### Pre-treatment checklist:

- Understand insurance coverage
- Make dental appointment
- Arrange for transportation to and from treatment
- Talk with your doctor about palliative care
- Set up help at home with chores and errands
- Make accommodations for time off work
- Fill any prescriptions needed to help with possible side effects
- Ask about the amenities in your treatment facility
- Follow all directions from your doctor

### Items you may want to bring to chemotherapy:

- Layers of comfortable clothing that make it easy to access your vein or port
- A blanket, pillow, socks
- Snacks and drinks if permitted
- Books, music, tablet, laptop (\*ask if the facility has WiFi)
- Small craft projects
- Hard candies to help with nausea and dry mouth
- A friend or loved one



### Questions for your care team:

- What side effects might I experience and what can I do to relieve them?
- Should I eat a special diet during treatment?
- Is there anything I should avoid after treatment?
- Who do I contact if I have any questions?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

### List your own questions here:

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### What to expect during treatment

There are two main methods of administering chemotherapy. Some chemo drugs are given orally, but the most common method is by intravenous, or IV, injection, over a period of time.

If your medication is oral, you will go to the pharmacy and pick it up. In addition to information you receive from your doctor about your chemo, your pharmacist is also a great resource. The package insert that comes with the drug can be very detailed and your pharmacist can help explain it.

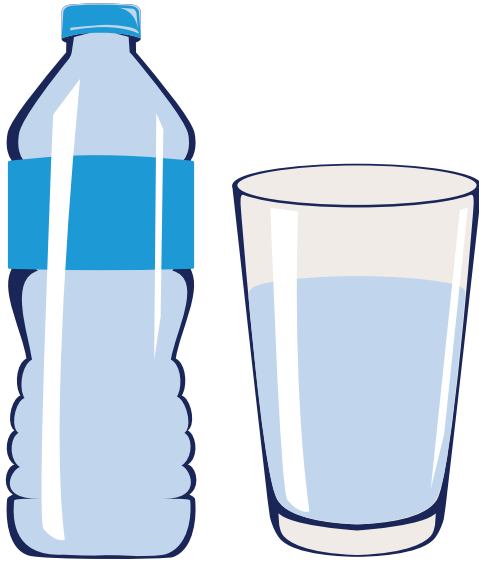
If your treatment is intravenous, you will have an IV inserted into your arm. Some people choose to undergo surgery before chemo begins to insert a port, or a little plastic disk, that can be used as the entry site for the medication. This eliminates the need to find a vein each time.

On the day of treatment, a health professional will likely check your vital signs, and take your height and weight in order to calculate the appropriate dose of chemo. You may also have your blood drawn to see if you are well enough to receive chemo that day.

Often your treatment includes pre-chemotherapy medications to help with possible side effects. These drugs may make you sleepy, so be sure to arrange for someone else to drive you home.

During the actual treatment, you will just be sitting. That's why it is good to bring activities to help pass the time.

A nurse will check on you throughout chemo to see how you are doing.



### Contact information in case of questions or emergency:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

### What to expect after treatment

After a session of chemotherapy is over, the IV catheter will be removed and your vital signs checked. If you have an implantable port, it will stay in for all of your chemotherapy sessions.

Your oncologist and/or nurse will review possible side effects and tips to help manage them. These tips are also good to keep in mind for people receiving chemotherapy orally. Some other things to talk to your doctor about include:

- Should I avoid interacting with crowds or children while I am receiving chemotherapy?
- What should I eat or drink after treatment?
- Should I take any precautions after chemotherapy?  
*For example, flushing the toilet twice after use is a good way to make sure no one around you is exposed to chemo agents that may remain in your system after treatment.*

Before you leave, ask who you should call if you have any questions or concerns. And remember, it's important to talk to your doctor about any questions you may have, including any potential side effects you are experiencing as soon as they start.

For more information please visit [Lung.org/lungcancer](https://Lung.org/lungcancer) or call Lung HelpLine at 1-800-LUNGUSA