How to Contact Us
Medical Concerns and Questions

• Please call your center (breast, leukemia, etc.), not the Infusion Center.
• Urgent (but not life-threatening) symptoms: call your center or 716-845-2300.
• Amherst Center patients: Call 716-845-2900 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday – Friday.
• After hours and on weekends: Call 716-845-2300. The Call Center staff can connect you with a triage nurse. If you need to be seen, they can refer you to our Assessment and Treatment Center (ATC), which is open 24/7.
About Your Treatment

Your doctor has recommended drug therapy and/or blood products as part of your treatment plan. Drug therapy may include chemotherapy, immunotherapy, and/or targeted therapies.

Chemotherapy drugs kill cancer cells by stopping them from growing and multiplying. Often, you will hear it called “chemo” for short. Unfortunately, healthy cells can be affected too – particularly cells that reproduce quickly, such as those that line your hair follicles and your digestive tract. This is what causes many of the side effects commonly associated with chemo. The good news is that these cells usually repair themselves after chemotherapy has ended.

Immunotherapy drugs, also known as biotherapy, are different from chemo. They act on your immune system so your body can fight the cancer.

Targeted therapy drugs work by identifying and attacking specific types of cancer cells with less harm to normal cells.

- Drug therapy may be prescribed to cure or control cancer or to relieve symptoms and make you more comfortable.
- Treatment periods are often alternated with rest periods to allow your body time to get stronger before the next round or “cycle” of drug therapy.
- Side effects will vary greatly from person to person, depending on many factors including the drugs used, the dose, and your general health.

The people who will be caring for you in our Chemotherapy & Infusion Centers have prepared this guide to help answer your questions and prepare you for your visits.

Knowing what to expect can help relieve worry and help you feel in control. Please let us know if you have questions. We are here to help with your needs and concerns.

The term “drug therapy” is used in this book because the Chemotherapy Infusion Centers administer all types of cancer drug therapies including chemotherapies, immunotherapies, and targeted therapies.
How to Prepare

Sometimes your doctor needs blood test results before they can prescribe your drug therapy.

Blood is drawn either the day before or the morning of your infusion. Allow about 1 hour for your doctor to get the results. Your doctor must have these results before he or she can write the orders for your drug therapy. Talk with your doctor about if and when you will need blood tests.

Your white blood cells (WBC) play an important role in how well your immune system is working and in your ability to fight off infections. If your WBC count is too low, your infusion may be delayed until your blood count(s) recovers.

Blood Tests
Two Convenient Locations

The Downtown Buffalo Lab
Main Hospital Lab (ground floor)
Monday – Thursday, 6 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Fridays, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Clinical Science Center (CSC) 4th floor
By Appointment Only
Monday – Friday, 6 a.m. - 2 p.m.

The Amherst Center Lab
Located in Amherst Infusion Center
100 College Parkway, Amherst NY
Monday – Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Please make a list of all the medications and doses you are currently taking and bring it to all of your appointments.

If you normally take prescription medications at home (nausea, high blood pressure, diabetes, pain, etc.), please bring them with you to your infusion appointments. Bring enough to cover you for 8-10 hours.

If another doctor prescribes medication while you are in treatment, make sure they know what drug therapy you are receiving and when.

Tell your Roswell doctor about any prescription or over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, herbs, or supplements you take because they may affect your treatment. Please ask your physician what you may or may not take during your drug therapy.
Pharmacy
Once the lab results have been evaluated, your doctor will write the orders and send them to the pharmacy. A pharmacist will prepare all the medications you are to receive and, for your safety, double-check all the doses. The pharmacists cannot prepare your medications until they receive your doctor’s orders AND you are checked into the Chemotherapy & Infusion Center.

Blood Bank
If you receive blood or blood-products, you may need a lab test the day before or the day of your scheduled transfusion. It will take about 30 minutes to get these results.

Once the results are received, the nurse will notify your doctor, who will write the orders for the blood or blood-products you require.

This order goes to the Blood Bank where they prepare the blood or blood products, which can take an additional 30 to 60 minutes.
Getting Started

The Team
When you see your doctor, he or she will discuss your treatment plan. Your doctor, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant will evaluate you and determine if you are medically ready and able to receive drug therapy. (This may include having blood tests.)

When all the necessary information is available and the results are within normal ranges, your doctor will write the orders for your chemotherapy or blood product(s).

The doctor’s orders go to the pharmacist who prepares the medications and sends them to the nurses in the Chemotherapy & Infusion Center.

Your nurses will review the orders, double-check them for your safety, and administer the drug therapy as ordered.

Your Appointment
We want your appointment to go as safely and smoothly as possible and we want you to know what to expect so you can plan accordingly.

Your appointment will include the lab tests and other processes we have described. If you have an 8 a.m. appointment, the time it takes for lab test results and pharmacy preparation of the drug means that your chemotherapy may not begin until about 9 a.m. This is important if you have to arrange transportation or other personal matter.

As we strive to provide the best cancer treatments, nothing is more important to us than your safety and your comfort. We welcome your suggestions as to how to make this experience more comfortable for you.

Orientation Videos
Watch Our Drug Therapy Orientation Videos on YouTube

- Go [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)
- In the search box, type in: Chemotherapy Roswell Park Patient Education
- The video series includes the following sections:
  - Overview
  - Why the Wait
  - Meet Your Team
  - Support

If you need help accessing the videos, stop in the Resource Center inside the cafeteria on the 1st floor or call 716-845-8659.
Treatment Plan
Your nurse or clinical pharmacist will provide you with drug fact sheets that will contain information about the medications you will be taking, such as:

- Names of your drug therapy and other medications
- How those medications are given and how they work
- What you need to tell your doctors and nurses before you begin treatment
- Possible side effects
- Suggestions to prevent and/or manage those side effects
- When to call your doctor
- Other important information you should know about your drug therapy

Both the Buffalo and the Amherst Chemotherapy & Infusion Centers are staffed with highly skilled nurses who have received special training in administering these medications. If you have any questions or concerns, please ask your nurses.
Your Visit

Wait Time
It is best if you arrive at either infusion center at your appointed time. Appointments are scheduled according to the amount of time the staff anticipates each patient will need.

If you are early, you may experience an extremely long wait time. If you arrive late, you may also experience an extremely long wait time, as other patients will be seen at their scheduled time.

Some delays may occur within our regular busy schedule. A patient may need urgent attention. Another may need extra time to understand his treatment plan or need complex care. We apologize for any wait due to these unexpected events.

It may seem that you are waiting a long time or that people who arrived after you are being taken first. Here are some reasons why this may occur:

- Unexpected medical emergencies arise that require the staff's immediate attention.
- We may be waiting for your test results.
- A patient may have come from another center within Roswell Park and he or she may have had all the required tests done at that center.

While You Wait
At the Buffalo location, if the Chemotherapy & Infusion Center tells you there will be a delay, you may be given a pager so you can go to the Resource Center for Patients and Families (located within the cafeteria on the first floor), the Chapel, or the cafeteria while you wait. The staff will page you when you need to come back.

The Roswell Park Amherst Center does not have a cafeteria. It is located in a building that has a soup and sandwich shop on the ground floor.

If you are receiving intravenous (IV) drug therapy, let the nurse know if you have any burning, redness, or swelling at the IV site during your infusion.
How Your Drug Therapy Will be Given

Depending on the type of cancer you have, the drugs you are receiving and the duration of your treatments, you may receive your drug therapy through an IV in your arm or hand, a PICC (peripherally inserted central catheter) line, or other type of catheter, or a port.

- PICC lines are longer than the IVs that are typically used in your hand or forearm, and they are placed in a bigger vein. The catheter remains in place between treatments. This means they do not have to start a new IV for each treatment. Catheters are soft, thin tubes. Blood (for testing) can also be removed through this catheter.
- Intrathecal catheters are placed in the spinal canal to deliver medication into the spinal fluid to treat cancers of the central nervous system.
- Intracavity catheters are placed directly into a cavity (hollow space) such as the chest, belly, or pelvis so the chemo can be delivered to the tumor without entering your bloodstream and being carried to all the tissues and cells of your body.
- A port is a small device placed under the skin. It has a reservoir with a silicone top where needles can be inserted. There is a catheter attached to the port to give medications and fluids. See page 15 for more about ports. You can feel the port under the skin but when properly placed and kept clean, there should be no discomfort. The port is removed when treatments end.
How Long Will my Drug Therapy Take?

It can take anywhere from 30 minutes to 10 hours to get your drug therapy, depending on the treatment protocol, dose, and how it is administered.

Those that require more than 10 hours are done in the inpatient section of Roswell Park, or at home. Ask your doctor before your first treatment how long they expect it will take. For the remaining treatments, you can check with the nursing staff.

During Your Visit

- There are recliner chairs in each individual treatment area in the Chemotherapy & Infusion Center. Each recliner has a color TV with cable service. Newspapers and light refreshments are available.

- Patients receiving intrathecal (spinal) drug therapy must remain lying flat after treatment. If you have intrathecal chemo, you will be given a stretcher bed.

- You may bring a snack with you or purchase something at the cafeteria or deli to bring to your treatment. Please avoid foods that have a strong odor as they may cause nausea for the others receiving treatment.

- Dress warmly. The center may feel cool, especially after you have received IV fluids. There are blankets available for you, if you desire.

To prevent the spread of infections, visitors must be over age 18.
After Drug Therapy

Taking Care of Yourself

Stay well hydrated in the days before and after your infusion. We recommended you drink 2-3 quarts a day, preferably water, unless your doctor told you to restrict fluids. Fluids also help prevent dehydration and constipation.

- Get a lot of rest and include exercise in your day, when possible.

- Eat properly to maintain your strength. Clinical dietitians are available to help you make the best decisions about your diet. If you would like to speak with a dietitian, please ask for a referral from your nurse.

- Avoid anyone who is sick, even if it is only a cold. The drugs used need to be very powerful to kill the cancer cells. This can be very hard on your immune system and make you more susceptible to illness. You can get quite sick from germs that may only give everyone else a slight cold.

- Talk to your friends or family about your feelings. You may find it easier to talk to someone who is less emotionally involved such as a counselor or a support group. See Resources & Support section, page 18.

- Keep your health care team informed. Let them know if you are not feeling well or if you are experiencing side effects. There are many options to help relieve pain, nausea, and other symptoms.

- Keep your mouth clean. Brush your teeth and gums with a very soft brush. Use fluoride toothpaste and alcohol-free mouthwash. Do not use tobacco. Alcohol and tobacco can cause dryness irritation.

- Patient education materials can help you manage side effects and find support. They are available in the Resource Center (see page 18), in the MyRoswell patient portal on www.roswellpark.org, and from your nurse.
New Patients
On your first visit, your nurse will review your drug therapy and you will get a schedule of your appointments.

Follow-Up Call
We have partnered with Premedex to call you a few days after your infusion to see how you are doing. You will recognize our phone number on your caller ID as 716-845-2300.

They will identify themselves as “From Roswell Park...on behalf of your MD” and review your patient education and any issues you may have. If needed, they will alert your medical team to give you a call.

Should I call Roswell Park if I go to the ER?
Yes. It is very important that you let us know when you arrive at any Emergency Department or are admitted to another hospital. You can call your Roswell Park Treatment Center or Roswell Park’s main number 716-845-2300.

Important – In the case of a life-threatening emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency department. Bring your Roswell Park “green card” (ID card) with you and let the emergency staff know the last time you were treated at Roswell Park. Please contact your Roswell Park doctor or center and let us know you are in the ER or have been admitted to the hospital.
When to Call Your Doctor

In general, call your physician if you:

- **have any sign of infection:** fever of 100.4 °F (38 °C) or higher, chills, cough, sore throat, pain or burning upon urination, or redness or tenderness along a vein, IV site, or at any other wound or skin irritation
- **have any sign of an allergic reaction:** itching or hives, swelling in your face or hands, swelling or tingling in your mouth or throat, chest tightness, trouble breathing, dizziness, or palpitations
- **have unusual bruising or bleeding:** bleeding that lasts more than 10-15 minutes or that causes dizziness, black or bloody stools, vomit that is bloody or that looks like coffee grounds, blood in your urine or mucus, unusually heavy menstrual bleeding, spontaneous bleeding from your gums or nose, or superficial bleeding into the skin that appears as a rash of pinpoint-sized reddish-purple spots (petechiae)
- **have difficulty walking or bending,** swelling and/or pain in your legs or arms, or numbness and/or tingling in your hands or feet
- **have persistent and/or severe vomiting or diarrhea** (loose, watery stools, more than three times in one day) that lasts more than 24 hours after treatment, is not relieved with medication, or that prevents you from eating or drinking. Call if you can’t keep anything down.
- **have problems with your eyesight** (blurred or double vision), or if you have headaches, dizziness, or extreme fatigue (tiredness)
- **have a sore mouth or throat** and/or white patches in your mouth or on your tongue
- **are coughing up yellow, green, or rusty colored mucus**
- **are extremely weak** or if you are sleeping most of the time
Questions & Answers

What is Drug Therapy?
Drug therapy is the general term for using medications to treat disease.

What are the Different Kinds of Drug Therapy?
There are many drugs and combinations of drugs used to fight cancer. When only one drug is given, it is called single agent therapy. If several drugs are given at the same time, it is called combination therapy. Your doctor will work with you to find the best treatment option for you.

Immunotherapy is a treatment to boost or restore the ability of the immune system to fight cancer, infections, and other diseases. Monoclonal antibodies, cancer vaccines, and T-cell therapies are types of immunotherapy.

How Do They Work?
Chemotherapy drugs kill cancer cells by stopping them from growing and multiplying.

Immunotherapy drugs (biotherapy) work by stimulating or suppressing your immune system to help your body fight cancer.

Targeted therapy drugs work by identifying and attacking specific types of cancer cells with less harm to normal cells.

Hormone drug therapy slows the growth of cancers that grow in the presence of hormones such as estrogen, testosterone, and progesterone.

How is Drug Therapy Administered?
Drug therapy can be given in a number of ways. Many medications are too harsh to go through the digestive tract, so they are given intravenously (into a vein/IV) through a catheter (thin tube). One end of the tube is connected to a bag containing your medication and the other end is placed into a vein.

Some medications is available in pill or liquid form that can be taken by mouth, and others can be applied topically, like a cream or lotion.

Drug therapy may be given as an injection. The name of the injection tells you where the chemotherapy will be placed:

- intrathecal or intraventricular: into the fluid that surrounds the spinal cord and brain
- intramuscular: into a muscle
- intra-arterial (IA): into an artery
- subcutaneous: just under the skin
- intrapleural: into the chest cavity
- intraperitoneal (IP): into the abdominal cavity
- intravesical: into the bladder
- intratumoral: into the tumor
How Will I Feel During My Infusion? Will it Hurt?
Most people do not find getting drug therapy a painful experience. It can, however, affect people in different ways and those effects can vary widely. Your type and stage of cancer, your previous health, the type and dose of your drug therapy, and other medical conditions can all play a part in how drug therapy affects you.

Please let your health care team know how you are feeling. Tell them if you are having side effects and talk about how to manage them.

How Long Does Drug Therapy Last?
Drug therapy is administered during a series of treatment sessions. Your Roswell team will determine the number of sessions you need. A complete series of sessions is called a course.

Usually, your doctor tells you when your drug therapy will be complete when you begin your sessions. But there are complications that can delay treatment. The most common physical cause of delay is a drop in your white blood count (WBC), also called neutropenia, which puts you at high risk for infection. Complications, such as a drop in WBCs, RBCs (red blood cells), or platelets need to be fixed before you can have another treatment.
What Can I Do to Make My Drug Therapy as Successful as Possible?
Preparing yourself is important. We are here to help.

• Let your doctor or nurse know if you are taking any vitamins or herbal supplements or remedies, including garlic tablets.
• Tell your doctor or nurse if there are any changes in your prescription or over-the-counter medications/supplements.
• In general, avoid aspirin products. However, if your primary care doctor has prescribed a daily aspirin, do not stop taking it unless your Roswell Park doctor says it is OK to stop.

• Drink 3-4 quarts/liters every day to help you stay hydrated.
• If you have heartburn, you can try Tums®, Rolaids®, or Mylanta®.
• If you become constipated, you may take over-the-counter stool softeners.
• It is important to shower or bathe and **KEEP YOUR SKIN MOIST**.
• Talk to your doctor and nurse if you have any unexpected side effects, or if your side effects are severe.

Get plenty of rest, eat a balanced diet, and seek support.
About Your Port

A port is a device that allows us to give you medications and fluids and to take blood samples without the discomfort of repeated needlesticks. Ports are called vascular or venous access devices because they provide access to your veins. A port is placed under your skin in a minor outpatient procedure. A common location for a port is just below your right collarbone.

A port has two parts:

• The port reservoir sits in a pocket just under your skin and has a raised silicone center called a septum. The septum is where needles are inserted, so it is made from material that seals itself after each puncture.

• The catheter is a soft, thin tube. It connects to the port reservoir on one end. The other end lies in a large vein near your heart.

Ports are also called chest ports or implanted ports. They may also be called by product brand names such as Port-A-Cath®, Infus-A-Port®, SmartPort®, Mediport®, Microport®, or PowerPort®.

A port can stay in place permanently, if necessary, or it can be removed when it’s no longer needed. When not in use, the only care a port needs is a monthly flush with heparin and saline.

How does the Port Work?
The port can be used to deliver medication by inserting a special needle through the skin into the port. The medication passes through the catheter into a large vein in the chest, where it is quickly diluted in the bloodstream.

How do I Care for my Port?
For the first few days after you get your port, you will need to take care of the small incision made during the procedure.

• You will receive written instructions on how to care for your port when it is placed.

• For 1-2 days after you get your port, the area will feel sore, like a bruise. The area will be entirely healed in about 10 days. While you are healing, avoid heavy exertion and contact sports.
• For the first week after you get your port – and anytime the port is accessed – you must keep it clean and dry. Cover the area surrounding your port with a double layer of plastic wrap when showering and tape the edges down. Keep your back to the shower.
• For the first 2 weeks – and anytime the port is accessed – do not submerge the port in water (no pools, baths, or hot tubs).
• Keep the bandage on the incision until it heals.
• If you have sterile tape/Steri-Strips™ over the incision, do not pick it off. It will eventually loosen and fall off on its own.
• Once the incision heals, the port requires no special care. You do not need a bandage, and you can resume your normal activity level when the port is not in use.
• We will give you information that tells you where your port is located on your body and whether it can be used for CT scan injections. Keep this information in a safe area.

How Long Will I Have a Port?
Only your physician can let you know how long your therapy will last. When the port is no longer needed, it can be removed.

What if I Suspect a Problem?

For the first 1-2 days after getting your port, the area around the incision is usually red and/or sore. Should it last beyond this time, please call your doctor or center.

Call your doctor immediately if you have:
• signs of infection: fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, chills, pain, or swelling or increasing redness or soreness in the incision area more than 2 days after the port is placed
• shortness of breath or dizziness
• bleeding around the incision or port (after the 2nd day)
• bleeding that soaks through gauze (at any time)
• difficulty flushing, when port is accessed

Urgent/Emergency Situations
• If you are having urgent, but not life-threatening symptoms, call your center. After hours, your call will be answered by our nurse triage line or call center staff.
• If you are sick and need immediate attention for non-life-threatening symptoms, your physician must contact the Assessment and Treatment Center (ATC) on your behalf. (It is not a walk in clinic.) The ATC is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
• Emergencies: Call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency room. Please bring your green Roswell Park ID card with you.
• If you go to the ER or are hospitalized, please let us know.
Safe Handling of Your Oral Drug Therapy

How Should I Handle my Medication?
• Wash your hands before and after touching your medication.
• Do not allow anyone not involved in your care to handle your medication. Only you or a designated caregiver should touch it.
• When someone else handles your medication, they should wear gloves.
• Never break, crush, chew, or open your tablets or capsules unless otherwise instructed.

How Should this Medication be Stored?
• At home, store this medication separately, away from other medicines.
• Store your medication in a place that is away from sources of water, direct sunlight and excessive heat, cold or humidity. Be sure children and pets cannot reach your pills.
• Read the medication package and any attached paperwork to see if there are other rules about how to store your medication, such as refrigeration.

What Should I do if Another Person or Pet Swallows or is Exposed to my Medication?
• Keep calm.
• Flush the area with water, if the exposure was on the skin.
• Call the Poison Control Center immediately at 1-800-222-1222.

What Should I Do with Leftover Medications if my Treatment is Changed/Discontinued?
• Do not put these medications in the garbage (see below) or down the toilet.
• Keep your medication stored in a safe place until you can return it.
• Roswell has drug disposal containers available on the 1st floor connection between the main hospital and the Clinical Sciences Center.
• New York has Take Back programs for the collection of household drugs. Go to the NY Department of Conservation website dec.ny.gov/chemical/67720.html and click on “Find a free collection site near you”.

If there is an urgent need to dispose of oral drug therapy and there are no drop off locations near you, follow these instructions:
• Mix whole pills (do not crush or open) in water and add salt, dirt, ashes, or cat litter. Do not hide them in food.
• Place mixture in a bag, box, or plastic tub that you can seal. Then secure the container with strong tape.
• Place the sealed container in the trash as close to your trash collection day as possible.

If you have any questions or concerns about your medication, please call your center (GI, Breast, etc.)
Resources & Support

The Resource Center for Patients and Families

The Resource Center for Patients and Families at Roswell Park offers information, support, and materials designed to educate and guide you through every step of your journey. The Resource Center, located on the 1st floor of the hospital inside the Sunflower Café cafeteria, is open Monday – Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, please call 716-845-8659.

Services
- Educational cancer information from Roswell Park clinicians and national patient and professional organizations.
- Laptops with Wi-Fi access and printers and a lending library of books, DVDs, CDs, and DVD players.
- A Wig Boutique that provides one new wig and one head covering per year at no cost to people experiencing hair loss due to cancer treatment. A second wig may be purchased at cost.
- Orientations for patients about to begin drug therapy.
Cancer Coach Program
Cancer coaches offer patients the opportunity to speak with cancer survivors who understand the impact of a cancer diagnosis. Coaches are trained and dedicated volunteers who provide support, comfort, and practical information.

Patients are matched with a coach based on their diagnosis, cancer stage, age, and/or gender.

For more information, contact our Resource Center at 716-845-8659.

CancerConnect
CancerConnect, Roswell Park’s Online Patient Community, is for anyone whose life has been touched by cancer. It’s a safe place to voice ideas and concerns, learn from the experiences of others, laugh, and most importantly, realize that you aren’t alone. The community is moderated, and it’s easy to register, all you need is an email address.

Join us at community.roswellpark.org.

Support Groups
For information about our in person support groups, call 716-845-8665.

General Information: 1-800-ROSWELL (1-800-767-9355) or 716-845-2300.

Trusted Websites

MedlinePlus®
medlineplus.gov
Information from government agencies and health-related organizations on many subjects, including drugs and supplements.

National Cancer Institute (NCI)
cancer.gov

NCI: Chemotherapy and You
cancer.gov/publications/patient-education/chemo-and-you

NCI: Side Effects of Cancer Treatment
cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/side-effects
You may be receiving your treatment at one of our care network locations.

Breast Care of Western New York
Williamsville, NY

Oneida Health Cancer Care
Oneida NY

Jamestown Medical Oncology & Hematology
Jamestown, NY

Roswell Park Hematology
Oncology of Niagara
Niagara Falls, NY

Roswell Park Hematology
Oncology Southtowns
West Seneca, NY

Roswell Park Hematology
Oncology Northtowns
Williamsville, NY

For a full listing and more information about those practices, visit roswellpark.org/carenetwork.
Locations

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center has two locations for drug therapy infusions.

Downtown Campus*

The Chemotherapy & Infusion Center is located on the fourth and fifth floors of the Scott Bieler Clinical Sciences Center, on our main campus in downtown Buffalo.

Michigan and Carlton Streets
Buffalo, New York 14263
716-845-8954

Suburban Location

The Roswell Park Amherst Center is located in the town of Amherst, on Youngs Road between Main Street and Wehrle Drive.

100 College Parkway Suite 290
Amherst, New York 14221
716-845-2900

*Weekend appointments are only available in Buffalo.

Talk with your physician about which location is appropriate for you. Roswell Care Network locations are listed on page 20.