

YOUR GUIDE TO THE  
**CHEMOTHERAPY  
INFUSION CENTER**



# WELCOME TO ROSWELL PARK CANCER INSTITUTE



Your doctor has recommended chemotherapy, biotherapy, and/or blood products as part of your treatment plan. Chemotherapy agents are drugs that kill cancer cells. Often, you will hear it called “chemo” for short. These drugs work by stopping cancer cells from growing and multiplying.

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. Side effects will vary greatly from person to person, depending on many factors including the drugs used, the dose, and your general health. Biotherapy, also known as targeted therapy, uses drugs designed specifically for a particular disease.

Chemotherapy or biotherapy may be prescribed to cure or control cancer or to relieve symptoms and make you more comfortable.

The people who will be caring for you in the Chemotherapy & Infusion Centers in Buffalo and Amherst have prepared this guide to help answer your questions and prepare you for your visits. Knowing what to expect can help relieve your apprehension and help you feel in control.

Please feel free to ask questions and talk to the members of your health care team about your treatment. We are here to help with any needs or concerns.



We are only a phone call away if you need us. Call (716) 845-8954 (Buffalo) or (716) 845-2900 (Amherst) and choose the option you want.

# GETTING STARTED

## LOCATION

Roswell Park Cancer Institute has two locations where you can receive chemotherapy infusions.

- The Roswell Park Cancer Institute Downtown Buffalo Chemotherapy & Infusion Center is located on the fourth and fifth floors of the Clinical Sciences Center. The phone number is **(716) 845- 8954**.
- The suburban location, the Roswell Park Cancer Institute Amherst Center Chemotherapy Infusion Center, is located in Suite 290, at 100 College Parkway in the Town of Amherst. It is off of Youngs Road between Main Street and Wehrle Drive. The telephone number is **(716) 845-2900**.



Roswell Park  
Cancer Institute  
Elm & Carlton Streets  
Buffalo, NY 14263

RPCI Amherst Center  
100 College Parkway  
Suite 290  
Williamsville, NY 14221

Talk with your physician about which location is appropriate for you.

## 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 chemotherapy or biotherapy. (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).

Your chemotherapy or biotherapy nurses will review the orders, double-check them for your safety, and administer the chemotherapy or biotherapy as ordered.

Both the downtown 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.

At your first visit, a team member will give you a tour of the chemotherapy or biotherapy area and answer any questions or concerns you may have.





## TREATMENT PLAN

Your Chemotherapy & Infusion Center nurses will provide you with drug fact sheets that will contain information about the medications you will be taking, such as:

- names of chemotherapy or biotherapy 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
- a list of circumstances in which you should call your doctor immediately (and circumstances when it is okay to wait a bit before calling)
- other important information you should know about medications and how often you will receive chemotherapy or biotherapy. (Treatment periods are often alternated with rest periods to allow your body time to get stronger before the next round or “cycle” of chemotherapy.)

# HOW TO PREPARE



## BLOOD TESTS – TWO CONVENIENT LOCATIONS

1. **The Downtown Buffalo Lab** is located on the ground floor of the main hospital. It is open Monday through Thursday from 6:00am to 5:00pm, and from 8:00am to 4:30pm on Fridays. There is also a satellite lab in the Buffalo Chemotherapy & Infusion Center that is open Monday through Friday, from 6:00am to 2:00pm.
2. **The Amherst Center** has a lab and it is located in the same suite (#290) as the infusion center, at 100 College Parkway, Amherst, NY. The Amherst Center lab is open Monday through Friday 7:30am to 3:30pm.

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 chemotherapy may be delayed to give your body a chance to replenish its supply before your next dose.

Sometimes your doctor will need the results of a recent blood test before a decision can be made regarding the proper medication or dose you will receive. You will need a blood test either the day before, or the morning of, your treatment. Allow approximately 60 minutes for the results to be available to your doctor, depending on the type of lab tests ordered. Please note: Your doctor must have these results before he or she can write the orders for your chemotherapy. Not every patient needs a blood test that day, so ask your doctor to find out what days you will be scheduled for bloodwork.



## 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 30 to 60 minutes.







# YOUR VISIT

## WAIT TIME

The staff at Roswell is always working on developing new and better ways to treat cancer, reduce symptoms, and prevent side effects. As a result, there are many new patients seeking treatment at our hospital.

Some delays may occur within our regular busy schedule. A patient may develop an urgent or emergency condition that requires our care and attention. Another may need some extra time to understand his treatment plan. Some may require 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, which are needed before your chemotherapy or biotherapy can be prepared and administered.
- 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.

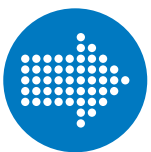
If the Chemotherapy & Infusion Center tells you there will be a delay, you may be given a pager so you can go to the Resource Center for Patients and Families (located within the cafeteria on the first floor), the Chapel, MJK Park, or the cafeteria while you wait. The staff will page you so that you will know when to return.

Weekend appointments are available only in Buffalo.

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.

It is best if you arrive at either chemotherapy 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 appointed time.



Every effort will be made to minimize your wait time. If you have any questions or concerns, ask your nurse or nurse manager.





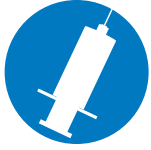
## YOUR APPOINTMENT

Your appointment in the Downtown Buffalo Chemotherapy & Infusion Center will include the lab tests and other processes we have described. That means that if you have an 8am 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 am.

It is important that you are aware of this in the event you have to arrange for transportation or any other personal matter.

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.

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.



## HOW YOUR CHEMO WILL BE GIVEN

Chemotherapy can be given in a number of ways. Some chemo medications are taken by mouth and some are given as injections. Most are given through an IV (intravenous), which delivers the medication directly into a vein. Please let the nurse know if you have any burning, redness, or swelling at the IV site during your treatment.

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

- Catheters are soft, thin tubes. PICC lines are longer than the IVs that are typically used in your hand or forearm, and they are placed in a larger vein than those in your arm. The catheter remains in place between treatments, avoiding the needle stick of starting a new IV with each treatment. Blood (for testing) can also be removed through this catheter. Intrathecal catheters are placed in the spinal canal to deliver chemotherapy medications into the spinal fluid in order 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.
- Ports are small, round discs placed under the skin to which a catheter can be attached during treatment sessions. Though you can feel it, if it is properly placed and kept clean, there should be no discomfort. A port is removed when no more chemotherapy treatments will be given.



## HOW LONG YOUR CHEMOTHERAPY OR BIOTHERAPY ADMINISTRATION WILL TAKE

Administration of chemotherapy or biotherapy in either of our centers can take from 30 minutes to 10 hours, 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 chemotherapy must remain lying flat after treatment. If you have intrathecal chemo, you will be given a stretcher bed.
- Due to space constraints, only 1 visitor at a time is allowed to be with you in the chemotherapy clinic area. Please note: to minimize disruption to the other people receiving chemotherapy and to prevent exposing patients with weak immune systems to infection, visitors must be over age 18.
- 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.



## MEDICATIONS

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

If another doctor prescribes medication while you are receiving chemotherapy treatments, make sure he or she knows what chemotherapy you are receiving and when. Also, keep your doctor at Roswell Park informed of any drug, vitamin, herb, or supplement you take, regardless of whether or not it required a prescription.

Some medications, vitamins, and herbal supplements may affect your chemotherapy. Please ask your physician what you may or may not take during your chemotherapy.





# AFTER CHEMO



## TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

- Eat properly to maintain your strength. Clinical dietitians are available to help you to 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 in chemotherapy 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 are likely to get quite sick from germs that may only give everyone else a slight cold.
- Get a lot of rest and include moderate exercise in your day.
- 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)
- 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.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT MOUTH PROBLEMS

Here are some suggestions to help you prevent mouth pain and sores:

- If possible, have a dental checkup before starting treatment. Tooth decay, cavities, and other dental problems can increase your risk of infection.
- Keep your mouth moist and drink lots of water. Eight to twelve cups every day. Artificial saliva products are available if you need them.
- Keep your mouth clean: brush your teeth, gums and tongue using a very soft toothbrush moistened with warm water. Use toothpaste that contains fluoride. If you use a water pick, use the weakest setting.
- Floss daily, but if you have areas of bleeding or sores, avoid these areas until they heal.
- Use an alcohol-free mouthwash because alcohol can cause mouth dryness and worsen irritation. Biotene® is one example of a mouthwash that you can buy without a prescription. Special toothpastes are also available (Biotene® or one that is baking soda based.) Check the labels to make sure your mouth products do not contain any type of alcohol. If you are not sure if a product contains alcohol, check with your pharmacist.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO IF YOU WEAR DENTURES OR REMOVABLE APPLIANCES

- Make sure you clean them properly every day.
- Do not wear your dentures while you sleep at night.
- Weight gain or loss can cause dentures to lose their “fit”. Should this happen to you, have your dentist adjust your dentures to avoid injuring the tissues in your mouth.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO IF YOUR MOUTH IS SORE

- Brush your teeth even if your mouth is sore. If a toothbrush causes too much discomfort, you can use an oral swab, which is similar to a Q-Tip, but has a sponge on the end instead of cotton.
- Eat soft foods. Avoid hard, crunchy, and chewy foods.
- Soften foods in a blender with some form of liquid such as gravy, juices, milk, or water and drink them from a cup or through a straw.
- Ice chips may help with mouth pain and/or swelling.
- To lessen mouth pain, gargle with a 1/8 teaspoon of salt and a teaspoon of baking soda mixed with 8 ounces of warm water. Swish it around in your mouth for a few minutes and then spit it out.
- To prevent aggravating any existing mouth problems, avoid all tobacco products (smoked or chewed); lemon and glycerin swabs; all products containing alcohol; citrus fruits; condiments or foods with vinegar; and spicy, hot, or acidic foods and drinks. Cola, teas, and coffee are all acidic.
- Always check with your doctor before you take any over-the-counter medicines for mouth pain, including acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and ibuprofen (Motrin®/Advil®). These medications can mask signs of infection, like a fever, or affect your liver or kidney function.



In case of emergency, call 911 or go to your closest hospital emergency room.

## PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS FOR MOUTH PROBLEMS

Your health care provider will discuss the options that are available for you, if prescription medication is necessary.

- Nystatin, an antifungal rinse, or clotrimazole, a lozenge, may be prescribed to reduce your risk of getting an infection from mouth sores. In more severe cases, you may be prescribed an antibiotic that you can take by mouth.
- BMX suspension is a specially made compound in the pharmacy that combines Benadryl®, lidocaine, and Maalox® and can be used to reduce pain and irritation.
- Gelclair® is a prescription mouth gel that is designed and approved for the management and relief of pain caused by mouth sores. It works by forming a barrier that protects the nerve endings that cause pain. You can eat, drink, and take medications while using Gelclair®, but avoid drinking or eating anything within 1 hour of Gelclair® treatment.



## WHEN TO CALL YOUR DOCTOR

In general, call your physician if you:

- have any sign of infection: fever of 100.5°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 3 times in 1 day) that lasts more than 24 hours after your treatment and/or is not relieved with medication
- cannot keep down any food or liquid
- have problems with your eyesight, such as 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

## HOW TO CONTACT US

You can always call when you have questions. We are here to help.

- For all medical questions or concerns during office hours, please call your physician or the Ambulatory Center (for example, prostate, breast, leukemia, etc.) where you are being treated, not the infusion center.
- If you need to reach the Amherst Center for any other reason, call **(716) 845-2900**.
- For any questions or concerns during evenings or weekends, please call the switchboard operator at **(716) 845-2300**. Please provide the operator with your doctor's name and they will direct your call to the appropriate medical personnel.



# CHEMO QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

## WHAT IS CHEMOTHERAPY?

Chemotherapy is the general term for any medication or combination of medication that kills, prevents the growth of, or damages cancer cells.

## WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF CHEMOTHERAPY?

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

Biotherapy is a treatment to boost or restore the ability of the immune system to fight cancer, infections, and other diseases. Some biotherapies are vaccines, growth factors, and monoclonal antibodies. Biotherapy is often referred to as targeted therapy.

## HOW IS CHEMOTHERAPY ADMINISTERED?

Chemotherapy can be given in a number of ways. Many chemotherapy 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 chemotherapy is available in pill or liquid form that can be taken by mouth, and others can be applied topically, like a cream or lotion.

Chemotherapy 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 DOES IT WORK?

Chemotherapy slows down or stops the growth of cancer cells. Usually, it recognizes and attacks cancer cells because those cells reproduce quickly. Unfortunately, there are some normal cells in your body that also reproduce quickly – like those that line the digestive tract and hair follicles. That is why chemotherapy can cause nausea, vomiting, hair loss, and other side effects. The good news is that, in many cases, the side effects get better or go away after chemotherapy is over.

## HOW WILL I FEEL DURING CHEMOTHERAPY? WILL IT BE PAINFUL?

Most people do not find getting chemotherapy itself a painful experience, but it affects people in different ways and those effects can vary widely. Factors that can influence how chemotherapy will affect you include your previous health, your type and stage of cancer, the type and dose of chemotherapy you are receiving, and other current medical conditions.

Doctors and nurses cannot know how you will feel during chemotherapy. Please talk to your nurses about managing side effects.

## HOW LONG DOES CHEMOTHERAPY LAST?

Chemotherapy 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 chemotherapy course.

Usually, your doctor tells you when your chemotherapy 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 resolved before you can have another treatment.

## WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE MY CHEMOTHERAPY AS SUCCESSFUL AS POSSIBLE?

- Eat a balanced diet, get plenty of rest, and seek support.
- 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.
- Avoid aspirin products. If your primary care doctor prescribed an aspirin a day, do not stop taking it, unless you are instructed to stop.
- It is important to drink an extra quart or more of liquids every day to keep you 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 bath and KEEP YOUR SKIN MOIST.
- Talk to your doctor and nurse if you are experiencing any side effects other than those you have been told to expect, or if your side effects are severe.
- Preparing yourself is important. We are here to help!







# 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 9:00am to 4:00pm. For more information, please call us at **(716) 845-8659** or **(716) 845-1729**.

### 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 per year at no cost to people experiencing hair loss due to cancer treatment. A second wig may be purchased at cost.
- Uplifting and educational programs such as 'Look Good...Feel Better'® (American Cancer Society) and hands-on art projects led by our Artists-in Residence.

## 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 [www.cancerconnect.com/roswellpark](http://www.cancerconnect.com/roswellpark).

## CANCER INFORMATION SERVICES

Roswell Park's Cancer Information Service, **1-877-ASK-RPCI (1-877-275-7724)**, can answer your questions about Roswell Park and assist you in finding the services you need.

## TRUSTED WEBSITES

### MedlinePlus®

[www.medlineplus.gov](http://www.medlineplus.gov)

Offers authoritative information from government agencies and health-related organizations. MedlinePlus® also contains information about drugs and supplements.

### National Cancer Institute (NCI)

[www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)

### Chemotherapy and You

[www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/chemotherapy-and-you](http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/chemotherapy-and-you)

### Chemo Side Effects

[www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/coping/physicaleffects/chemo-side-effects](http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/coping/physicaleffects/chemo-side-effects)



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CALL  
THE CHEMOTHERAPY INFUSION CENTER  
AT (716) 845-8954



ROSWELL PARK  
CANCER INSTITUTE  
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