

Answers to Common Concerns About Chemotherapy

After deciding to have chemotherapy, you may be feeling anxious about your upcoming treatment. It's OK to feel that way.

To help ease your mind, think about how chemotherapy will help control, cure, or ease symptoms of your cancer, so you can spend more time doing the things you enjoy.

Knowing what to expect from treatment can also help you feel less anxious and better prepared. Here are the facts behind some common concerns about chemotherapy.

How will I feel during treatment?

Unfortunately, it's hard to predict how you'll feel during chemotherapy; everyone is different.

Plus, side effects vary based on the chemo medicines you get. So you may have many, some, or no side effects.

Now for the good news: Cancer care has come a long way over the years. Your care team is well-equipped to help you handle many common side effects like fatigue, nausea, vomiting, and loss of appetite.

So, talk with your care team before your first treatment. They'll tell you about all the things you can do to feel better, if needed.

Will I lose my hair?

Not necessarily. Whether you'll lose your hair or have other physical changes like weight loss, mouth sores, or skin problems depends on many things related to your treatment, like your overall health, your specific cancer, and your chemo dose. Your care team will do all they can to limit such side effects.

You can do your part, too. Ask about what to expect. And if you notice any new symptoms or side effects, tell your care team pronto! They may be able to help.

What will life be like after treatment?

Often, most—if not all—side effects go away after finishing chemotherapy. But it may still take a few weeks or months for you to recover. So, take it easy and be kind to yourself.

After treatment, you may also have some late effects. These can pop up months or years later. They depend on the type and amount of your chemotherapy. They may include things like bone loss, memory problems, nerve damage, depression, or rarely, a second cancer.

If you're worried about such things, tell your care team. They can help you cope with any emotional and physical changes.

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And remember this: The benefits of chemotherapy often outweigh its possible risks.

Still have questions or concerns? Your care team is here to help. Get in touch to learn more about what you can do to make sure your cancer treatment goes smoothly.