Chemotherapy Tips



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What to Bring

- Photo ID and insurance card
- List of current medications
- Snacks and drinks
- Comfort items like a blanket, tablet, laptop, cellphone, earbuds, books
- Support person
 - One visitor allowed in the infusion center
 - Must be 18 years or older and free of illness symptoms



What to Wear

- If you have a port, wear a button-down shirt for easy access.
- If you have a peripheral IV, wear a short-sleeve shirt.
- Apply numbing cream (EMLA) to your port site 30–60 minutes before arrival (prescription required).



Medications

- Take your daily medications the morning of treatment unless your provider gives you different instructions.
- If unsure, ask your care team at your visit or call before treatment day.



Hydration & Nutrition

- Drink at least 4 (16 oz) bottles of water daily.
 - Caffeinated and alcoholic beverages do not count.
- Supplement drinks can help support calorie and protein needs.
 - Examples: Boost[®], Ensure[®], Orgain[®], Vega[®] (vegetable protein-based)
- Eat small, frequent meals that are easy on the stomach.
- If appetite is low or weight loss is a concern, discuss with your team or request a dietitian referral.



Arrival Time & Lab Work

- If labs are same day as treatment, arrive 30 minutes to 1 hour before your scheduled infusion or provider visit.
- Labs 1–2 days before treatment are highly encouraged to reduce day-of delays.
- At each visit, discuss what dates, times, and days of the week work best for your future scheduling.



Mouth & Skin Care

- Use salt and baking soda rinses (½ tsp each in warm water) 2–3 times daily to prevent mouth sores.
- Notify the clinic if you develop painful mouth sores—you may need prescription mouthwash.
- Healios[®] may be used to promote healing from mouth sores.
- For dry skin, apply CeraVe[®], Eucerin[®], or Vanicream[®] daily, especially after bathing.



During Treatment

- You may receive
 - Pre-medications to prevent nausea or allergic reactions (e.g., steroids, antihistamines)
 - IV fluids to help with hydration and minimize side effects
- Infusion reactions can happen during or shortly after treatment. Report any of these symptoms to your nurse immediately.
 - Chills, fever

- Trouble breathing, chest tightness
- Itching or rashFlushing or sweating
- Dizziness, headache, nausea
 Feeling faint or sudden fatigue
- Your nurse will monitor you closely and provide medications or stop the infusion if needed.



After Treatment

- You may feel tired or nauseated—rest, stay hydrated, and eat light meals.
- Continue using mouth rinses and moisturizers regularly.
- Take anti-nausea medications as prescribed.
- Track symptoms at home and report any changes or concerns to your care team.
- A follow-up visit or lab check may be scheduled based on your treatment plan.



Over-the-Counter (OTC) medications help with side-effects

Only use OTC medications after discussing with your oncology team.

- Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) mild pain or fever
- Loperamide (Imodium®) diarrhea
- Senna (Colace[®], or Miralax[®]) constipation
- Diphenhydramine (Benadryl®) itching or sleep aid
- Lidocaine gel (Orajel®) mouth pain
- Artificial tears or eye drops dry eyes
- Aquaphor[®], Eucerin[®], Vanicream[®] dry skin
- Electrolyte drinks (Pedialyte®, Gatorade Zero®, Liquid I.V.®) hydration

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Contact Information

If you experience any of the following, please call your oncology team immediately:

- Fever of 100.4°F or higher
- Uncontrolled nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- New or worsening pain

- Signs of infection (redness, swelling, drainage)
- Confusion or difficulty breathing

Clinic Phone Number: __

After-Hours: Call the 24-hour Nurse Care Line at 1-800-231-5257.

Emergency: Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room if you have severe symptoms.



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