

# CHEMOTHERAPY

Chemotherapy (also called chemo) uses drugs to destroy or damage fast-growing cells like cancer cells. It is used to shrink tumors, slow cancer's growth, relieve symptoms, or help people live longer.

Most chemotherapy drugs are given intravenously (through a vein). Some drugs can be given as a pill or by injection. These drugs continue to work for days or weeks after they are taken. Thus, a period of rest of one to three weeks follows each dose or cycle. This gives your body a chance to recover from some side effects.

You may get one type of chemotherapy at a time (single-agent therapy) or several drugs in combination (combination therapy). You also may get chemo in combination with other types of treatment. **These are the latest types of chemotherapies that are available as of August 2020.**

TYPE OF CHEMOTHERAPY	COMMON SIDE EFFECTS	IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW
<b>Anthracyclines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nausea</li> <li>• Vomiting</li> <li>• Hair loss</li> <li>• Low blood counts and risk for infection, fatigue, and bleeding</li> <li>• Mouth sores</li> <li>• Redness, pain, and swelling of the hands and feet (common with Doxil only)</li> <li>• Increased risk of congestive heart failure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This chemo can increase the risk of heart problems. You may have to switch to a different chemo or get an additional medicine to help protect your heart.</li> </ul>
<b>Taxanes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neuropathy (numbness, tingling, or pain in the hands or feet)</li> <li>• Low blood counts and risk for infection, bleeding, and fatigue</li> <li>• Hair loss</li> <li>• Fluid retention</li> <li>• Mild to moderate nausea</li> <li>• Nail and skin changes</li> <li>• Dry eye or loss of natural tears</li> <li>• Risk of allergic reaction</li> <li>• Flu-like symptoms</li> <li>• Joint pain</li> <li>• Weakness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For HER2+ cancer</li> <li>• Used with Xeloda when HER2+ cancer no longer responds to Herceptin.</li> </ul>
<b>Platinum-containing compounds</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low blood counts</li> <li>• Thinning or brittle hair</li> <li>• Loss of appetite or weight</li> <li>• Diarrhea</li> <li>• Nausea and vomiting</li> <li>• Neuropathy (numbness, tingling, or pain in the hands or feet)</li> <li>• Taste changes</li> <li>• Less common side effects of Cisplatin are kidney problems and hearing loss</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This group of drugs can be very effective in patients with triple-negative breast cancer or BRCA-associated cancers.</li> </ul>

# CHEMOTHERAPY (Continued)

TYPE OF CHEMOTHERAPY	COMMON SIDE EFFECTS	IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW
<p><b>ANTI-METABOLITES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5-FU (Fluorouracil®)</li> <li>• capecitabine (Xeloda®)</li> <li>• gemcitabine (Gemzar®)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Xeloda and Flouoruracil</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mild nausea</li> <li>• Hand-foot syndrome with redness, pain, and swelling</li> <li>• Diarrhea</li> <li>• Mouth sores</li> </ul> <p><b>Gemzar</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever (within the first 24 hours of administration)</li> <li>• Mild to moderate nausea and vomiting</li> <li>• Fatigue</li> <li>• Diarrhea</li> <li>• Skin rash</li> <li>• Low blood counts, especially platelets</li> <li>• Lung problems (rare but serious possible side effect)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These drugs can cause hand-foot syndrome. It is important to tell your doctor or nurse as soon as you have pain, blistering, cracking, or redness in your hands or feet.</li> </ul>
<p><b>MICROTUBULE INHIBITORS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eribulin (Halaven®)</li> <li>• ixabepilone (Ixempra®)</li> <li>• vinorelbine (Navelbine®)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mild to moderate nausea and vomiting</li> <li>• Constipation</li> <li>• Diarrhea</li> <li>• Neuropathy (numbness, tingling, or pain in the hands and feet)</li> <li>• Pain at the tumor site after infusion</li> <li>• Low blood counts — anemia, risk for infection, and bleeding</li> <li>• Fatigue</li> <li>• Hair loss</li> <li>• Allergic reactions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ixempra is given alone or with Xeloda.</li> <li>• In many cases, Navelbine does not cause hair loss.</li> <li>• If Navelbine causes pain in your veins, ask about getting a port.</li> </ul>

