



Where will I go for chemotherapy treatment?

Chemotherapy is usually given as an outpatient in a chemotherapy day unit. However, some chemotherapy treatment requires a stay in hospital. Some chemotherapy drugs come in a tablet version and can be taken at home.

Chemotherapy Day Unit

Most chemotherapy day units are open Monday to Friday. You can usually make an appointment time to suit both you and your chemotherapy department. If you are receiving your chemotherapy at a day unit it will normally be given directly into a vein through a drip (intravenously). A chemotherapy nurse will care for you while you are receiving your chemotherapy.

Hospital Stay

There are several reasons why having chemotherapy sometimes requires a hospital stay for a night or two. Some chemotherapy drugs have to be given very slowly, often with fluids given directly into a vein, through a drip, before and after receiving the drug. This can take up to 12 hours and you have to be closely monitored by a chemotherapy nurse during this time.

Your cancer doctor may also want you to stay in hospital to monitor how you react to the drug you have been given.

How will my treatment be planned?

The chemotherapy treatment your cancer doctor recommends will depend on several factors. These include:

- The type (pathology) of lung cancer you have.
- The size, position and spread of your lung cancer (stage).
- Your general health and how you will cope with treatment.

You will be offered the best standard treatment available that current research shows is likely to work best for you. This is why you may meet other people with the same cancer as you who are having different chemotherapy treatments.

You may be asked to take part in a chemotherapy clinical trial. This usually involves comparing treatments to help find out which works best.

Chemotherapy for lung cancer

Preparing for chemotherapy



Please see our *Living with lung cancer* booklet for more information on clinical trials. Visit www.roycastle.org/ayqpack or call our free helpline on **0333 323 7200 (option 2)**.

What tests will I have before chemotherapy starts?

Before you start chemotherapy you will have scans or x-rays. The results of these tests will help cancer doctors to plan your treatment.

Your blood will be checked before treatment and regularly during and after treatment, to see if your white cells (cells that fight infection), haemoglobin (cells that carry oxygen), and platelets (cells that clot the blood) are normal. The blood sample will also check if your blood biochemistry (kidney and liver function) is within normal limits. This is called your blood count. If your blood count is too low you might get a blood transfusion, dose reduction, or delay in your treatment.

It is very important that cancer doctors know what your blood levels (blood count) are before and during chemotherapy. This enables them to tailor your drug treatment appropriately.

How many treatments will I need?

Chemotherapy is given as a course of treatments - each treatment is called a cycle. This is because at any one time, some cancer cells will be resting. Chemotherapy only works on cells that are active and in the process of dividing. So resting cells will not be killed.

Giving chemotherapy in cycles helps to make sure that over time all cancer cells will be treated. Giving chemotherapy in cycles also gives your body time to recover from any side-effects which you may have experienced. How often you have each cycle, and how long your chemotherapy treatment lasts altogether, depends on many factors including:

- The type of chemotherapy drugs used.
- Why you are receiving chemotherapy.
- How the cancer cells respond to the drugs.
- How your body copes with any side-effects from the drugs.

Preparing for chemotherapy



I am frightened of needles and feel sick at the thought of treatment - what should I do?

It is not unusual to be frightened of needles and nursing staff have many ways of reducing your fears. Tell them if you are feeling nervous about needles before you start your treatment, as there are creams available to numb your skin. Occasionally some people feel sick at the thought of treatment, or perhaps the sight or smell of hospitals. This is called anticipatory nausea and vomiting and can be very successfully helped with a variety of methods, including relaxation techniques, counselling and medication. Discuss your options with your cancer doctor or lung cancer nurse specialist.

Please see our *Living with lung cancer* DVD for more information on chemotherapy. Visit www.roycastle.org/ayqpack or call our free helpline on **0333 323 7200 (option 2)**.

GIVING HELP AND HOPE

The charity has two aims:

Supporting people living with lung cancer - Working closely with lung cancer nurses, we provide information, run lung cancer support groups and offer telephone and online support. Our patient grants offer some financial help to people affected by lung cancer.

Saving lives - We fund lung cancer research, campaign for better treatment and care for people who have lung cancer, and raise awareness of the importance of early diagnosis. Our lung cancer prevention work helps people to quit smoking and encourages young people not to start smoking.

Call us on 0333 323 7200 (option 2)

This information has been taken from the following sources:

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