

How to Manage Your Chemotherapy Side Effects



PMH

This sheet contains information and tips to help you manage the side effects of chemotherapy. If you have any questions about this information, please speak to your nurse.

REMEMBER:

- Bring your medication bottles with you to your chemotherapy appointment
- Bring food with you. You may be at PMH for most of the day and may need to eat before your chemotherapy appointment

How to take your anti-nausea medications

Follow the instructions below on Day 1 to Day 3 of your chemotherapy treatment to help you control nausea and vomiting. Day 1 is the day you begin your chemotherapy.

Medications for Day 1 (the day of chemotherapy)

The nurse taking care of you during your chemotherapy can help you follow these instructions.

- Zofran (Ondansetron) 8mg - Take 2 tablets (16mg) 1 hour before your chemotherapy. Bring your medication to your chemotherapy appointment and wait for your nurse's instructions before taking.
- Stemetil 10mg – Take one tablet every 6 hours *as you need it for nausea*

Medications for Day 2 (the day after chemotherapy)

- Decadron 4mg - Take one tablet twice a day
 - Example: If you take one tablet at 8:00 am, take the second tablet at 8:00 pm (12 hours apart).
- Zofran (Ondansetron) 8mg - Take 2 tablets (16mg) once a day
- Stemetil 10mg – Take one tablet every 6 hours *as you need it for nausea*

Medications for Day 3 (the 2nd day after chemotherapy)

- Decadron 4mg - Take one tablet twice a day
 - Example: If you take one tablet at 8:00 am, take the second tablet at 8:00 pm (12 hours apart).
- Stemetil 10mg – Take one tablet every 6 hours *as you need it for nausea*

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Created: 09/2011

Form: D-5041

Helpful Hints While You Are Receiving Chemotherapy

Fluids

Try to drink between 2-3 litres of fluid everyday after receiving chemotherapy. This helps to flush your kidneys. Fluids to drink include: soup, juice, water, and any other drinks that do not contain caffeine.

Fever

It is very important that you have a thermometer at home to check your temperature if needed. If your temperature is 38°C (100°F) or higher you may have an infection and need to be treated right away. Call your doctor or nurse or go to your nearest Hospital Emergency Department and tell the healthcare team you are on chemotherapy. Remember to avoid infections by washing your hands often.

Constipation

Zofran is very constipating, so it is important for you pay attention to your bowel movements everyday. Many patients often need stool softeners and laxatives to help with their constipation in the first week after chemotherapy. Remember that your goal is **no constipation**. Speak to your nurse if you need help in better managing your constipation.

Stool softeners and laxatives are two kinds of over the counter medications that you can buy without a prescription to help you with your constipation. These 2 medications can be taken together if needed:

- **Stool Softener** (Colace®)

This medication is to make your bowel movements soft and is not a laxative. Start this medication 1-2 days before starting chemotherapy to prevent constipation.

Take 1-2 tablets twice a day increasing to three times as day as needed.

Do not take more than 6 tablets per day.

- **Laxative** (Senekot® or Senna®)

If you were constipated after your first cycle of chemotherapy you may want to start Senekot the day before your next round of chemotherapy to prevent constipation.

To relieve constipation:

1. If you have no bowel movement for 24 hours, take 2 tablets that night
2. If you still do not have a bowel movement by 2pm the next day, take 2 more tablets.
3. If you still do not have a bowel movement by bedtime, take 2 more tablets.
4. If you are still bothered by constipation, contact your doctor or nurse.

Do not take more than 8 tablets a day.