



*Welcome to  
Chemotherapy Orientation*

Kaiser Santa Rosa-  
Oncology Department

# Oncology Team

The RN's working in chemotherapy are Oncology Certified Nurses.

- ❖ They have received extensive specialized training from the Oncology Nursing Society, a nationally recognized and highly respected nursing organization who's mission is to promote excellence in oncology nursing and quality cancer care.

The Oncology Pharmacists are specially trained in chemotherapy.

# Oncology Pharmacy

## ❖ **Oncology Pharmacy**

**(707) 393-3003**

- ❖ Liaison to your Oncologist
- ❖ Licensed pharmacy to provide services specific to oncology
- ❖ Provide supportive care for side-effect management
- ❖ Monitor lab values/overall performances status and adjust therapies based on results
- ❖ Available for consultation for all oncology related concerns
  - ❖ Alternative and complimentary treatments

# Oncology Patient Services

## ❖ **Oncology Case Manager**

**Joanne McLaughlin, RN, OCN**

**(707) 393-4428**

- ❖ Liaison to your Oncologist
  - ❖ Resource nurse for all oncology patients
  - ❖ Financial Issues
  - ❖ Disability Issues
  - ❖ Medical records assistance
  - ❖ Symptom management and pain control
- 
- ❖ Patients receiving chemotherapy, please direct your oncology questions to chemo nurses/chemo pharmacists

# What is Chemotherapy?

Chemotherapy is the administration of drugs to treat cancer.

These drugs are absorbed throughout the body and destroy rapidly dividing cells.

Chemotherapy drugs preferentially kill cancer cells and may also affect normal cells such as hair and blood cells

There are 100's of chemotherapy drug combinations, so that each person receives a chemotherapy plan unique to their diagnosis and medical condition

# How is Chemotherapy Given?

Most chemotherapy is given intravenously (IV) through a tiny plastic catheter inserted with a needle into your arm or hand the day of treatment

Some types of chemotherapy require special types of venous access such as a port or PICC line

Some chemotherapy drugs are given by mouth or by injection

# What is the Purpose of Therapy?

Depending on the situation and type of cancer, chemotherapy might be able:

- ❖ To cure cancer
- ❖ To keep cancer from spreading
- ❖ To kill cells that may have spread to other parts of the body (metastasis)
- ❖ To keep cancer from recurring
- ❖ To relieve symptoms caused by cancer

# Chemotherapy Schedule

You will be receiving an individualized chemotherapy schedule at your first chemo appointment. *“We will try to honor your individual schedule request”.*

Your schedule depends on the type of treatment you receive

Treatments may be given daily, weekly, every other week, every three weeks or monthly or a combination of these

This schedule is called a chemotherapy cycle and most chemo is given in cycles

These cycles vary by type of treatment

Treatments can last from a few minutes to hours

Some treatments are given in the hospital



# Managing Side Effects of Chemotherapy

Side effects vary by type of therapy

You may experience some or no side effects

Most common side effects of chemotherapy

- ❖ Hair Loss
- ❖ Nausea and vomiting
- ❖ Diarrhea
- ❖ Low blood cell counts
- ❖ Rash
- ❖ Fatigue
- ❖ “Chemo Brain”
- ❖ Mouth Sores
- ❖ Nerve damage
- ❖ Nail Changes

# Hair Loss (Alopecia)

- ❖ Occurs with some kinds of chemotherapy
- ❖ Hair loss usually begins 10 days to 3 weeks after first treatment and can include all body hair
  - ❖ Can be very sudden and dramatic
  - ❖ Is not an indicator of whether your treatment is working or not
  - ❖ Use mild lotions and sunscreen on scalp
- ❖ Temporary during treatment, grows back 2-3 months after treatment has ended
- ❖ Wigs and hats are available through several sources
- ❖ “Look Good, Feel Better” class for women available through the American Cancer Society

# Nausea and Vomiting

- ❖ There are three types of nausea:
  - ❖ Acute (within 24 hrs)
  - ❖ Delayed (after 24 hrs, peak at 3-5 days)
  - ❖ Anticipatory (prior to chemo)
- ❖ Treatment depends on the type of nausea
- ❖ Can usually be prevented or managed with today's anti-nausea medication
- ❖ Keeping a journal and relaying specific information to your provider helps in prevention and treatment of nausea
- ❖ If your nausea is not being well-controlled, don't give up—communicate with the chemotherapy nurses and oncology pharmacists.
- ❖ Our Goal is:
  - ❖ Prevent nausea/vomiting
  - ❖ Treat breakthrough nausea/vomiting

# Diarrhea

- ❖ Can be severe with some treatments
- ❖ Can cause dehydration
- ❖ Drink plenty of fluids
- ❖ Try the BRAT diet
- ❖ Call you provider if you have more than 6 stools within four hours
- ❖ Refer to Chemo Related Diarrhea Handout

# Dehydration (Low Fluids)

- ❖ Can occur with nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or problems with fluid intake
- ❖ Symptoms include: dizziness, lightheadedness, low blood pressure, weakness, muscle cramps or confusion
- ❖ Call the chemotherapy nurses if you have been unable to take food or fluids by mouth for more than 12 hours
- ❖ Outpatient treatment may include medications to treat nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and/or IV hydration

# Blood Counts

- ❖ What is complete blood count (CBC)?
- ❖ Chemotherapy may decrease your blood counts temporarily and may delay your treatment
- ❖ This is an expected side effect of therapy
- ❖ Blood counts usually return to normal on their own
- ❖ Three main types of cells are monitored
  - ❖ Red blood cells: supply oxygen and nutrition to body cells
  - ❖ White blood cells: fight infection
  - ❖ Platelets: help with normal blood clotting

# Anemia

- ❖ Low red cell counts is called “Anemia”
- ❖ Symptoms may include: shortness of breath, dizziness, weakness, muscle cramps, fatigue
- ❖ Treatment may include:
  - ❖ Waiting for counts to return on their own
  - ❖ Injections of a medication called Epogen/Procrit
  - ❖ Iron Supplements
  - ❖ Blood transfusion

# Neutropenia (Low White Blood Count)

- ❖ Symptoms may include infection, fever, hard-shaking chills
- ❖ Call if fever  $>100.5F$  when you might be neutropenic
- ❖ If needed, treatment may include:
  - ❖ Injections of Neupogen to stimulate bone marrow
  - ❖ Antibiotics, if you develop a fever
  - ❖ Diet modification (neutopenic diet)
- ❖ If infection occurs, can require hospitalization



# Avoid Infection

- ❖ Wash hands often
  - ❖ Before meals
  - ❖ After using the bathroom
  - ❖ After touching animals
- ❖ Clean cuts with soap and water and apply antiseptic
- ❖ Wear gloves when gardening or performing housework
- ❖ Maintain good personal and oral hygiene
- ❖ Use a soft toothbrush
- ❖ Postpone dental cleanings if possible or check with the chemotherapy nurses before going to the dentist
- ❖ Stay away from people who are obviously sick
- ❖ Have someone else clean up after pets
- ❖ Wash fruits and vegetables before eating

# Low Platelet Count

- ❖ Symptoms may include bloody nose, cuts slow to stop bleeding, blood in stool or urine, or bruising
- ❖ If needed, treatment could be platelet transfusion
- ❖ Please call if any abnormal bleeding is seen

# Rash

- ❖ Can affect entire body or just certain areas
- ❖ Be sure to inform your provider of any rash
- ❖ Occasionally rashes become severe enough to require treatment such as prescription creams or antibiotics

# Fatigue

- ❖ Can result from treatment, or be a symptom of cancer
- ❖ The stress of a chronic illness or depression can be a factor
- ❖ Eat a well-balanced diet, get mild exercise and rest
- ❖ Resume as many of your normal activities as your provider recommends
- ❖ Let the chemotherapy nurses know if your having problems sleeping or if you feel depressed

# "Chemo Brain"

- ❖ Controversial topic, cause not well understood
- ❖ Reported symptoms are short-term memory loss and cognitive changes
- ❖ Can last six months to one year after chemotherapy treatments are complete
- ❖ Keep notes or lists for yourself to use as memory aids or enlist the help of a family member or support person

# Mouth Sores (Mucositis)

- ❖ Caused by the action of chemotherapy on rapidly dividing cells that line the GI tract
- ❖ Symptoms include redness, dryness or canker-like mouth sores
- ❖ Avoid alcohol-based mouthwash (Scope, Listerine)
- ❖ Gentle teeth brushing with soft toothbrush
- ❖ Drink plenty of fluids
- ❖ Inform the chemotherapy nurses at the first sign of problems
- ❖ Treatment may include special mouth rinses
  - ❖ Magic Mouth Wash
  - ❖ Saline or Baking Soda Mouth Rinses
  - ❖ Pain Medicines

# Peripheral Neuropathy (Nerve Damage)

- ❖ Nerve cells are sensitive to damage by certain chemotherapy drugs
- ❖ Usually noticed as numbness and tingling in hands or feet
- ❖ Can be temporary or permanent
- ❖ Inform the chemotherapy nurses at first sign of numbness or tingling

# Nail Changes

- ❖ Temporary nail discoloration can occur
- ❖ Can be painful and severe, but usually mild
- ❖ Keep nails and hands/feet clean
- ❖ Infections may require treatment with antibiotics



# Can I continue to work through treatment?

- ❖ Treatment and side effects are very individual
- ❖ Many people are able to continue working full-time or part-time though treatment
- ❖ You will be more tired, so adjustment to your schedule may be necessary

# Nutrition and Cancer Treatments

- ❖ Eating a healthy diet before you begin treatment is important
- ❖ During treatment, focus on high calorie, high protein foods to prevent weight loss

# Nutrition During Cancer Treatment

- ❖ Protein and calories are important for healing, fighting infection, and providing energy
- ❖ Please refer to the NCI booklet “Eating Hints” for more detailed information
- ❖ Try to drink 2 quarts (8 cups) of fluid each day unless instructed otherwise by your provider or nurse
- ❖ Use urine output to gauge your hydration level

# Important Take Home Message

- ❖ **Please notify the Infusion Center Staff** if you experience any of the following conditions:
  - ❖ Any discomfort or sores in the mouth or throat
  - ❖ Any temperature 100.5F or above, or if you have shaking chills
  - ❖ Diarrhea that is not controlled by **IMODIUM AD**
  - ❖ Constipation
  - ❖ Nausea or vomiting not controlled by medication
  - ❖ Any unusual bleeding
  - ❖ **Any conditions that cause concern or discomfort**

# Cancer Patient Services

- ❖ **Chemotherapy Support Group-Mondays**
  - ❖ Mondays 10:30 12:00 noon
  - ❖ Caregivers and patients undergoing Chemotherapy and/or radiation are invited
  - ❖ Bill Roby, LCSW
  - ❖ (707) 393-3229 for more information
  
- ❖ **Caregiver Support Group – 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday**
  - ❖ 10:00 – 11:30am Room E2 (Medical Office East-Second Floor)
  - ❖ Bill Dorsey, LCSW & Carol Geig, LCSW
  - ❖ (707) 393-3151 or more information

## Websites for further information

- ❖ American Cancer Society
  - ❖ [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)
- ❖ Scott Hamilton's Chemocare
  - ❖ [www.chemocare.com](http://www.chemocare.com)
- ❖ National Comprehensive Cancer Network
  - ❖ [www.nccn.org](http://www.nccn.org)
- ❖ National Cancer Institute
  - ❖ [www.cancer.gov/](http://www.cancer.gov/)
- ❖ Oncology Nursing Society
  - ❖ [www.ons.org](http://www.ons.org)

# How to Reach Us

- ❖ **Infusion Center Nurses: (707) 393-4634**
  - ❖ Monday – Friday: 8:30am – 5:00pm
  - ❖ Saturday: 9:00am – 12:30pm
- ❖ **Infusion Center Pharmacy: (707) 393-3003**
  - ❖ Monday – Friday: 9:00am – 5:00pm
- ❖ **After Hours and Weekends:**
  - ❖ **Before 9:00pm** call the Hospital Pharmacy: (707) 393-4700 (“Ask for the Oncology Pharmacist”)
- ❖ **Medicine Advise Nurse: (707) 393-4044**

# Sign-up for KP.org

Here's how to get a password to access an array of secure online features on kp.org and your physicians Home Page:

Go to kp.org and click "Register to get a user ID"

Step 1: Enter your name, Medical Record Number, date of birth, and email address.

Step 2: Read and confirm that you agree with the Web site terms and conditions.

Step 3: Choose your preferences for email announcements and information

Step 4: Choose a unique user ID

Confirm your current mailing address.

Step 6: Confirm your identity by entering the last four digits of your Social Security Number

Step 7: Answer five questions that only you will know the answers to.

Step 8: Choose a unique password and a secure password by selecting three security questions for which you'll provide your own answers.

You're done! Make note of your user ID and password and store it in a safe place. If you have any problems or questions with registration call 1-800-556-7677, or stop by your local Kaiser Permanente Health Education Center for



# Preparing for Chemotherapy

- ❖ Review NCI booklet
- ❖ Review websites
- ❖ Bring a support person
- ❖ Drink lots of fluids the day before and the day of chemotherapy
- ❖ Eat before treatment
- ❖ Bring snacks or lunch with you
- ❖ Bring things to occupy your time (books, movies, cards)
- ❖ Dress in layers
- ❖ Take premeds that have been prescribed to you
- ❖ Bring any medications (including pain meds) that you may need to take during your treatment.
  
- ❖ *Please speak to a chemo nurse if you plan to bring young children*

## Final Thoughts.....

- ❖ Cancer is a long, hard journey, but we are on the journey with you, supporting you every step of the way.