

Infusion Treatment

A Patient's Guide



www.guthrie.org



Welcome

Thank you for choosing the Guthrie Cancer Center for your medical care. Our team of dedicated professionals will do everything possible to make your experience here a convenient, and most importantly, a comfortable one for you and your family.

“A Patient’s Guide to Infusion Treatment” was designed to help you become an informed and involved participant in your own health care. If at any point you have questions regarding the information enclosed, we encourage you to reach out to any of our Guthrie staff members.

Remember, your comfort and care are of utmost importance during your entire treatment.

Our cancer team is here for you.



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Infusion Treatment

Preparing For Your First Infusion Treatment

Everyone reacts to treatment differently. Until you know how your body will respond, consider the following:

- Bring someone with you to drive you home or to ride with you on the bus.
- Eat a light breakfast and/or lunch the day of your treatment, but avoid fatty or highly seasoned foods, particularly before your first treatment.
- Children in the Cancer Center - To protect your loved ones, we request that no one under the age of 12 come with you to your treatment appointment without supervision by another adult.

In the Infusion Room

Getting Ready

- A special needle will be placed in the vein of your arm or in your port. While uncomfortable, neither of these procedures should cause you excessive pain.
- Your nurse will review the medication prescribed for you by your provider. In addition to your treatment, your provider may prescribe medication for the prevention of nausea, constipation, diarrhea, and/or pain. If you take pain medications regularly, please bring them with you to your appointment.
- After you arrive in the infusion area, our pharmacist will mix your medication, so there may be a slight delay while this occurs. Your medication will be administered by our specially-trained nurses. You will be closely monitored during the administration. If you have any unusual or new symptoms, please report them to a nurse immediately. Call bells are near each chair.
- During the infusion, you will be seated in a recliner. You may eat, drink, watch television, read or participate in other sedentary activities. Your medication will be administered through an infusion pump, which is plugged into the wall. If you have to go to the bathroom during your treatment, you may simply unplug the pump, which will automatically switch to battery power. Upon your return to your chair, you simply need to plug in the pumps and it will automatically start being powered by electricity once again. If you need assistance, please ask one of our staff members.

Infusion Treatment

In the Infusion Room

Things to Do

- You may visit our library while your infusion is running. Simply let your nurse know that you are going to be there. There are outlets in the library that you can plug your pump into. A computer and games are available for patient and family use. Please feel free to use this space during your treatments.
- You may bring a laptop computer with you during your infusion. You do not need a special password; when you sign onto your computer, choose the “guest” wireless network.

Eating and Drinking

- You may eat during the treatment. We have snacks available such as breakfast bars, crackers, cookies, pretzels, yogurt, pudding and Jell-O™. We also have drinks available such as juice, soda, tea and coffee.
- If you are here for an extended amount of time, you are welcome to bring a lunch from home, or the person accompanying you may go to the cafeteria or snack bar and purchase food. A refrigerator and microwave are available for your use in the cancer center. The cafeteria is on the second floor and a snack bar is on the first floor.
- We have phones available for emergency use. During your infusion, cell phones are also permitted.



Safety

Handwashing – Remember to always use frequent hand washing to help prevent infections.

Bathroom Use – It is strongly recommended that you wash your hands frequently following treatment. After your return home, flush the toilet twice with the lid down after going to the bathroom. This should be done for 48-hours.

Illness – Your resistance to infection is lowered during chemotherapy. Please remember to stay away from anyone who is ill.

Side Effects – We will provide a list of side effects that you need to watch for. Please contact us before any symptom becomes severe.

Caregivers – Please remember that chemotherapy is excreted in body fluids, so when caring for patients' urine, stool, vomit, etc., gloves should be worn and good hand washing should be utilized.

Sexual Relations - Your body fluids are toxic for 48-hours following chemotherapy. Therefore, sexual relations are not recommended immediately following treatment. Please use a condom for 48-hours following each chemotherapy treatment.

Conception – It is very dangerous to father a child or conceive a child while on chemotherapy and for 12 months following your last dose. Please be sure adequate birth control is utilized. Sperm banking can be considered for male patients, and other options may be available for women. Any questions or concerns about this should be discussed with your provider.

Lab Work

- Our lab is open from 7:15 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.
- Frequent blood work is required to monitor your response to the treatment. To ensure that our providers have your lab test results when they see you, we ask that you arrive at our reception desk approximately 45 minutes prior to your appointment. We open at 7:15 a.m., so patients with 8 a.m. appointments do not need to arrive until 7:15 a.m. If you live close by and want to avoid that wait, it is possible to have your labs done the day before your appointment. It is also possible to have your labs drawn early at any Guthrie regional office. If interested, please discuss these options with our staff.

Medication Refills

- Your provider has prescribed medication to treat your diagnosis of cancer. Our highly-trained nurses and pharmacists will administer your medication either by intravenous therapy, injection or a pill.
- 48-hour notice is requested for prescription refills. Only medication prescribed by our department will be refilled. Many medications require insurance authorization, so a 48-hour notice is absolutely necessary to avoid a lapse in treatment.
- Narcotic prescriptions must be picked up or mailed. We are not able to call refills into the pharmacy.
- Refills requested after 12 noon on Friday will be filled on Monday.
- Prescriptions can be ordered and refilled on eGuthrie.

Medication Disposal

Do not flush any of your unused medications down the toilet or put them in the garbage!
Please bring them to our office so the pharmacist may dispose of them properly.

Scheduling Your Appointments

We recognize that your time is valuable. In order to reduce the amount of time that you have to wait to see your provider or wait to receive treatments, we may have to adjust the day of the week and/or time of your appointment. Usually infusions lasting less than two hours will be scheduled in the afternoon. This ensures that people requiring long or full-day treatments are able to be treated when necessary. We will always strive to keep your appointments on schedule. Please let the secretaries know of any transportation, child care or work issues that need to be considered.



Infusion Treatment

Food & Fluids

It is extremely important to maintain healthy eating and drinking habits to help your body manage treatments, feel better and stay stronger.

- Drink at least eight 8 oz. cups of liquid unless otherwise directed. These liquids should be non-caffeinated and non-alcoholic.
- Eating adequate calories and protein will keep your body from becoming depleted and help you keep your strength. Your dietician will help you determine specific amounts.
- Notify your provider or nurse of any weight loss or gain, changes with appetite or any nutrition-related side effects.

For questions or a more individualized plan, please ask to see our Registered Dietician.

Support Services

The support services offered at the Guthrie Cancer Center go far beyond cancer treatment to help patients and their loved ones. Please discuss with your health care provider how you or a loved one can benefit from using these services.

The Guthrie Cancer Center Library

A consumer health library which provides informational materials to patients and their loved ones including books on cancer-related topics, internet access to search cancer relevant websites and educational DVD's to use while in treatment.

Women Empowered Cancer Support Group

Providing emotional and social support, as well as education for women with any type of cancer. This support group is held the third Tuesday of every month from 2-3 p.m. at the Guthrie Cancer Center. Please call 570-887-2721 for more information.

American Cancer Society Office

On-site American Cancer Society representatives provide numerous program and educational pamphlets. Various wigs and head coverings are available to patients at no cost. For additional information on how to access the American Cancer Society's Road to Recovery transportation program, please call 800-ACS-2345 or visit www.cancer.org.

Look Good...Feel Better Program

The American Cancer Society offers a free monthly program for women that teaches beauty techniques to patients in active treatment. To find the closest program near you, please call 800-395-LOOK or visit www.lookgoodfeelbetter.org.

Licensed Clinical Social Worker

Assists patients and their loved ones with the emotional, social and financial stressors associated with their diagnosis.

Patient Financial Advocate

A valuable resource for treatment related costs.

Chaplain

Assists with spiritual and religious concerns.

Family Members Calling for Information

If you have any family members or friends who may call us requesting information about you and your treatment, please be sure to complete an "Authorization to Use or Disclose Information" form, listing them as authorized individuals. This form can be obtained from our secretaries at the Cancer Center. We request that you select one family member to act on your behalf and the rest of your family can contact that person. Another option is to enroll in our eGuthrie program. This allows you, or any family member to whom you give access, to be able to check your test results online from any computer. Please talk to our staff if you are interested in utilizing this service.

Authorized family members can reach us by calling 570-887-2853, Monday - Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or to access an on-call physician, call the hospital operator weekdays after 5 p.m., holidays and weekends at 570-888-6666

Contact Us

If you have any questions, problems or uncontrolled symptoms, please do not hesitate to call us. Our nurse practitioners are available 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday with the exception of holidays. They will answer questions or discuss any concerns you may have. If they are with other patients, they will return your call by the end of the day. If you feel your problem is urgent, please tell the secretary, so that we can deal with those issues immediately.

After 5 p.m., weekends, and holidays, an oncologist is on-call. If you are having uncontrolled symptoms or any new symptoms listed below, please call 570-888-6666 and tell them your doctor's name and you need to speak to the oncologist on-call. If you need to go to the emergency room, let them know you are on chemotherapy.

If you are experiencing the following symptoms, call the Guthrie Cancer Center:

- Fever higher than 100.5°F
- Shaking or chills
- Unusual bleeding or bruising
- Shortness of breath/chest pain
- Irregular or rapid heartbeat
- Severe constipation or diarrhea, not controlled by medications
- Vomiting that continues 48-hours after treatment and is not controlled by medication
- Painful or frequent urination
- Blood in the urine
- Black or red stool
- Soreness, redness, swelling, or puss at your catheter or Port-a-Cath™ site
- Pain in a new place or pain that is not relieved by your pain medication
- Headache that is not relieved by acetaminophen

If you experience any of the following symptoms, call 911:

- Chest pain
- Severe onset of shortness of breath
- Uncontrolled bleeding
- Loss of consciousness
- Inability to communicate or move extremities

