Chemotherapy: Chinese (Traditional)

化療

本資訊是關於化療的。

任何下劃線的詞語都在末尾的詞語清單中進行解釋。詞語清單還包括詞語的英語發音。

許多癌症患者的治療方案中都會包含化療。

有些患者可能會接受其他的治療方法，例如手術、放療、標靶治療或其他抗癌藥物。醫院的醫生會向您解釋您的治療方法。我們還提供更多有關下列治療方法的繁體中文資訊。

若您對此資訊有任何疑問，請諮詢您正在接受治療的醫院的醫生或護士。

您也可於每日上午 8 時至晚上 8 時，致電麥克米倫癌症援助機構（Macmillan Cancer Support）免費熱線：**0808 808 00 00**。我們有傳譯員，所以您可以使用您自己的母語與我們溝通。當您致電我們時，請以英文告訴我們您所需要的語言。

如果您想以其他語言進一步瞭解癌症，請瀏覽 **macmillan.org.uk/translations**

本資訊主要介紹：

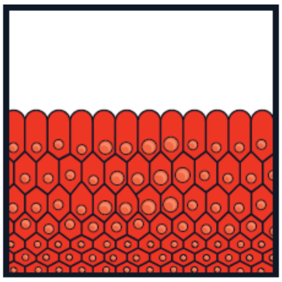
- 什麼是癌症？
- 什麼是化療？
- 什麼時候採用化療？
- 接受化療
- 了解您的治療
- 治療前的檢測
- 您將在哪裡接受治療？
- 治療需要多長時間？
- 治療計劃的改變
- 副作用
- 其他重要資訊
- 幫助您獲得合適的護理和援助
- Macmillan 能夠如何幫助您
- 詞語清單
- 更多繁體中文版資訊
- 參考文獻與致謝

什麼是癌症？

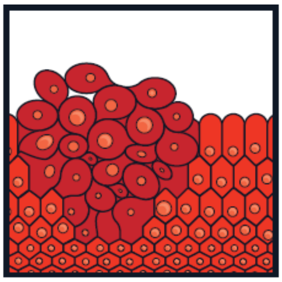
癌症從我們身體的細胞開始。細胞是構成我們身體器官及組織的微小組成部分。細胞接收來自身體的信號，告訴它們何時生長以及何時分裂形成新的細胞。我們的身體正是以這樣的方式發育及癒合。這些細胞可能會衰老、損壞或不再有用。當這種情況發生時，細胞會從身體收到信號，停止工作並死亡。

有時這些信號會出錯，細胞就會變得異常。異常細胞可能會繼續分裂，產生越來越多的異常細胞。這些異常細胞可能形成一個腫塊，稱為腫瘤。

正常細胞



形成腫瘤的細胞



並非所有腫瘤都是癌症。非癌症腫瘤（良性腫瘤）可能會生長，但不能擴散到身體的其他任何部位。它通常只會對附近被壓迫的器官造成問題。

屬於癌症的腫瘤（惡性腫瘤）可以長入附近的組織。

癌細胞有時會脫離第一個癌瘤，透過血液或淋巴系統轉移到身體的其他部位。在身體的其他部位擴散並發展成腫瘤的癌細胞被稱為繼發性癌瘤。

什麼是化療？

化療藥物能夠破壞癌細胞，致其死亡。健康細胞也可能受損，但它們通常會自行修復。

化療可以不同的方式進行。在治療期間，您可能會獲得一種或多種藥物。大多數化療藥物透過血液給藥。這意味著藥物可以到達身體任何部位的癌細胞。

什麼時候採用化療？

化療可以單獨進行，也可以與其他類型的治療一起進行，例如標靶治療、手術或放療。進行治療的方法：

- 作為某些類型癌症的主要治療方法
- 在其他治療之前進行，使癌症範圍變小
- 與其他治療同時進行
- 在完成其他治療後進行，試圖預防癌症復發
- 如果癌症無法治愈，則可以幫助患者更好受或更長壽。

化療有時也用於治療非癌症的疾病。

接受化療

化療通常按療程進行。每個療程之後都會有一些無需化療的休息日。這稱為治療的**週期**。您接受治療的週期數目取決於您患有的癌症類型。您的癌症醫生會與您討論您需要的週期數量。

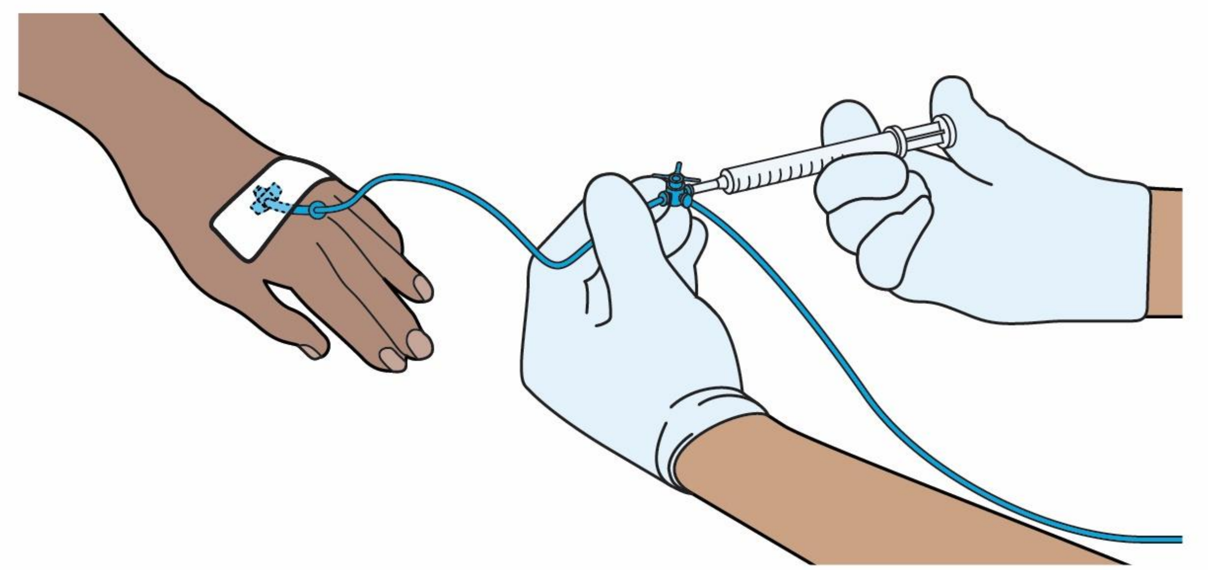
化療可能以不同的方式給藥。給藥方式包括：

- 注射或靜脈點滴
- 藥片或膠囊
- 皮下注射
- 肌肉注射
- 脊柱周圍液體的注射（鞘內化療）
- 膀胱注射
- 作為乳膏，治療皮膚癌。

靜脈化療

大多數化療藥物都是透過注射到靜脈的方式給藥。它們通常透過稱為插管的導管給藥。護士會將插管插入到您胳膊或手背靜脈中。然後，護士會將插管連接至吊袋或內部裝有化療藥物的注射器。插管會在您回家之前取出。

插管：



化療也可以透過插入手臂或胸部的插管給藥。插入手臂的插管被稱為 PICC 導管。插入胸部的插管被稱為中心導管。在您的治療過程中，這條導管一直都會在。如果您需要使用導管的話，您的護士會與您討論此事。

中心導管：

PICC 導管：

許多患者擔心化療會很痛苦，或者他們在接受化療時會有不同的感覺。靜脈化療應該不會令人感覺疼痛。因此，如果您感覺疼痛，請立即告訴您的護士。

有時，可以使用便攜式小泵在家中進行化療。

獲得化療藥片
化療藥片可以在家服用。只有某些類型的化療是以藥片的方式給藥。請記住，它們仍然有可能產生副作用。

了解您的治療

在您接受治療之前，您的醫生、護士或藥劑師會解釋：

- 您為什麼需要它
- 您接受治療的頻率
- 可能出現的副作用
- 您在接受治療後的感受。

除非您了解自己的治療方案以及您的感受，否則不應給予任何治療。您將被要求籤署一份表格，以表明您同意治療並了解其可能出現的副作用。這份表格叫作「同意書」。

最好是有既會講中文又會講英語的人士隨行。醫院裡可能有口譯員，但如果您有此需求，盡量提前提出。

很多患者一想到化療就擔心。如果您對治療有任何疑問，請諮詢您的醫生、護士或藥劑師。

治療前的檢測

在開始治療之前，您可能需要進行一些檢測。這些檢測可以幫助醫生檢查您的身體是否準備好接受治療。這通常包括驗血，也可能還包括檢查您的腎臟或心臟。有時，您可能需要進行 X 光檢查或掃描。您還將測量您的身高和體重。如果您可能懷孕，您可能需要進行妊娠試驗。

每次治療之前，您可能會進行血液檢查。這可能是在您治療當天或前一兩天進行。您的醫生或護士會檢查您的血液結果，並詢問您自上次治療以來的感覺。

您將在哪裡接受治療？

您通常在日間診所或醫院病房中接受治療。有時，您可能回在家中接受治療。您可以與您的醫生、護士或藥劑師討論您將在哪裡接受治療。重要的是要確保這是您接受治療的最安全地方。您可能需要乘搭交通工具去接受治療。如果您在去醫院時需要幫助，或需要獲得幫助支付交通費，請與您的護士交談。

治療需要多長時間？

您通常可以作為「日間病人」接受靜脈化療。這意味著您不需要在醫院過夜，治療結束後您就可以回家了。治療可能需要半小時到幾個小時。有些患者可能需要短暫住院。

您的治療過程通常會持續數月。這將取決於您患有哪種癌症。

治療計劃的改變

您的醫生使用檢測來檢查治療對您身體的影響。有時您的治療可能需要延遲或改期，以便讓您的身體有時間恢復。您的醫生會和您談談這件事。

副作用

化療藥物可能會引發令您不適的副作用，這是因為它們會影響您體內的健康細胞。大多數副作用在治療結束後會好轉，但有些可能會持續更長時間。您的醫生、護士或藥劑師會與您討論您可能出現的任何副作用。

不同的藥物會引起不同的副作用。有些患者的副作用很少，而有些患者的副作用可能更多。

我們在這裡描述最常見的副作用。您不太可能會出現所有列出的副作用。如果您注意到此處未列出的任何副作用，或者您對副作用有任何疑問，請諮詢您的醫生、護士或藥劑師。

您的護士會給您一些電話號碼，以便您在感到不適或需要建議時致電醫院。不論是白天還是夜晚，您隨時都可以聯絡醫院。請將這些電話號碼儲存在您的手機，或者記錄在安全的地方。

感染

化療可能會導致您血液中的白血球數量減少。這被稱「嗜中性白血球減少症」。這將使您更容易受到感染。

遇到下列情況時，請立即使用您留存的電話號碼聯絡醫院：

- 您的體溫超過 37.5°C（99.5°F）
- 您忽然感覺不適，即使體溫正常
- 您的體溫低於 36°C（96.8°F）
- 您有受感染的症狀，例如：
  - 感覺很熱或很冷
  - 發抖
  - 喉嚨痛
  - 咳嗽或呼吸急促
  - 腹瀉
  - 頻尿。

白血球數量通常會在您接受下一次治療之前恢復正常。在接受下一次化療前，您需要進行血液檢驗。若您的白血球數量仍然過低，您的醫生可能會將您的治療延後一小段時間。

有時您可能會被注射一種被稱為 G-CSF 的藥物，以幫助您的骨髓製造更多的白血球。

貧血
化療可能會減少您血液中的紅血球數量。紅血球偏低會讓您感到疲倦和喘不過氣。若您有這樣的感覺，請告知您的醫生或護士。您可能需要額外的紅血球（輸血）。或者您的醫生可能會給您藥物，來幫助您的身體製造更多的紅血球。

瘀傷和出血
化療可能會減少您血液中的血小板數量。血小板是幫助血液凝結的細胞。若您出現瘀傷或出血，請告訴您的醫生。這包括流鼻血、牙齦出血、血斑或皮膚上的皮疹。有些患者可能需要額外的血小板。

疲勞
感覺疲憊是一種常見的副作用。在治療後期，這種情況通常會更嚴重，並且在治療結束後持續幾個星期。盡量多休息。做一些溫和的運動也會有幫助，如短途散步。如果您感到睏倦，請不要開車或操作機器。

感覺噁心或嘔吐
接受化療後您可能會感到不適。您的醫生可能會給您一些抗噁心藥物來幫助您。請完全遵照您的醫生、護士或藥劑師的指引服用。如果持續感到噁心，請盡快聯絡醫院。他們會為您提供建議並將藥物更換成對您更有效的藥物。

掉髮
許多患者覺得這種副作用令人非常苦惱。並非所有的化療藥物都會讓您掉髮。有些藥物會令您掉一部分頭髮，有些則可能會令您全部頭髮都掉光。這可能包括身體上的其他毛髮。您的醫生或護士會解釋可能發生的情況。他們還可以為您提供如何護理頭髮和頭皮的建議。您也可以詢問有關獲得假髮或髮片的資訊。

如果您有掉髮的情況，這通常會在開始治療後 2 至 3 週發生。有時它可能會在幾天內發生。完成治療後，頭髮通常會在幾個月內重新長出。

您可能可以透過頭皮冷凍治療或使用冷帽來減少掉髮。這會降低治療期間頭皮的溫度。並非每位患者都可以接受頭皮冷凍治療，但您可以詢問您的護士這是否對您有用。

便秘
化療可能會引起便秘。多喝水、食用高纖維食物以及進行溫和的運動會有所幫助。如果您仍然有便秘，您可能需要服用瀉藥。您的醫生可以為您開一些藥。

腹瀉
化療也可能會引起腹瀉。您的醫生或護士會告訴您，治療是否會引發這些症狀。他們還會告訴，如果發生這種情況，您應該何時聯絡醫院。有些藥物可以改善情況。如果您有腹瀉，多喝水很重要。

口瘡
您的嘴可能會變得疼痛或乾燥，或者您可能有口腔潰瘍。多喝水並用柔軟的牙刷輕輕清潔牙齒可以改善情況。

盡量避免會刺激口腔的辛辣食物。如果您的嘴感到疼痛，請告訴您的醫生或護士。他們會檢查感染情況，並可能會給您漱口水或藥物來幫助您。

食慾不振

有些患者可能會失去食慾。這可能會持續幾天或更長時間。如果您認為您的飲食不足，或者您正在減肥，請諮詢您的醫生或護士。他們可以建議增加食慾並保持健康體重的方法。

味覺變化

您可能會注意到食物的味道不同。有些患者嘴裡有一種奇怪的味道。吮吸無糖糖果或薄荷糖可能會有所幫助。正常味覺通常在治療結束後恢復。

對神經的影響

一些化療藥物可能會影響您體內的神經。這可能會導致麻木、刺痛或疼痛。這種感覺通常會先出現於手指和腳趾。若出現這種情況，請告知您的醫生或護士。這通常會在治療結束後得到改善。對於某些人來說，它可以持續更長時間。

如果您感到不適或有任何嚴重的副作用，即使此處未提及，請務必立即讓您的醫生知道。

其他重要資訊

血栓

癌症和化療都可能增加形成血塊的機會。血栓可能導致：

- 手臂或腿部疼痛、泛紅或腫脹
- 呼吸急促或咳嗽
- 胸痛。

如果您有任何這些症狀，請立即聯絡您的醫生。血栓很嚴重，但您的醫生可以用藥物進行治療。您的醫生或護士可以為您提供更多的資訊。

其他藥物

有些藥物會影響化療或在您服用時有害。這包括在商店或向藥劑師購買的藥物。一定要告訴您的癌症醫生關於您所有的藥物處方或購買的任何藥物，包括維生素、中成藥和補健品。

生育能力

您的治療可能會影響您懷孕或令他人懷孕的能力。如果您對此感到擔心，請在治療開始前諮詢您的醫生或護士。

避孕

您的醫生會建議您在治療期間不要懷孕或令他人懷孕。化療可能會傷害發育中的胎兒。在治療期間使用避孕措施很重要。

性行為

如果您在化療後的最初幾天內發生性行為，則需要使用避孕套或口腔橡皮障。這是為了保護您的伴侶免受化療藥物的傷害。若您擔心這一點，您可以與您的醫生或護士交談。

哺乳

您不應該在治療期間或之後的一段時間內進行母乳喂養。這是因為化療藥物可以透過母乳傳遞給嬰兒。

醫療和牙科治療

如果您因癌症以外的任何原因需要住院，請務必告訴醫生和護士您正在接受化療。告訴他們您癌症醫生的姓名，以便他們尋求建議。

如果您需要牙科治療，請諮詢您的癌症醫生或護士。一定要告訴您的牙醫您正在接受化療。

接種疫苗

接種疫苗可以降低您感染某些疾病的風險。醫生通常建議癌症患者接種流感疫苗和新冠病毒疫苗。這兩種都是滅活疫苗，可以幫助降低感染風險。免疫系統較弱的人可以接種這種疫苗，因為這些不是活疫苗。

若您的免疫系統較弱，請避免接種活疫苗。因為活疫苗會讓您感到不適。

旅行

如果您計劃在治療期間出國旅行，請諮詢您的醫生或護士。您可能無法接種某些疫苗。他們還將檢查您的飛行是否安全。

暴露於陽光下時，記得要格外小心。一些化療藥物會使您的皮膚更容易灼傷。

化療期間工作

您可能需要在化療期間請假。有些人出於經濟原因需要繼續工作。您的醫生或護士可以為您提供建議以及您可以獲得的援助。我們有關於工作和癌症的資訊，以及關於如果您未能工作而需要申領福利的資訊。

幫助您獲得合適的護理和援助

如果您患有癌症並且不會說英語，您可能會擔心這會影響您的癌症治療和護理。但是您的醫療團隊應該為您提供滿足您需求的護理、援助和資訊。

我們知道，有時尋找合適的援助可能會面臨額外的挑戰。例如，如果您有工作或有家庭，可能很難抽出時間去醫院的預約。您可能還擔心金錢和交通費。所有這些都會讓人感到壓力和難以應對。

但我們可以提供幫助。我們的免費支持熱線 **0808 808 00 00** 可以用您的語言就您的情況提供建議。您可以與護士、經濟援助顧問、福利權益顧問和工作援助顧問交談。

我們還向癌症患者提供 Macmillan 資助金。這些是一次性的款項，可用於支付醫院停車費、交通費、託兒所費或暖氣費等費用。

Macmillan 能夠如何幫助您

在 Macmillan，我們知道癌症確診後會如何影響一切，我們在這裡為您提供援助。

麥克米倫支援熱線 (Macmillan Support Line)
我們有口譯員，所以您可以使用您的語言與我們溝通。您只需用英語告訴我們您希望使用哪種語言即可。我們可以幫助您解決醫療問題，為您提供有關經濟援助的資訊，或者在您想要與人交談的時候聆聽您的意見。熱線服務時間為每日上午 8 時至晚上 8 時。致電 **0808 808 00 00** 聯絡我們。

網上對話

您可以向我們發送網上對話信息，說明您需要口譯員。您只需用英語告訴我們您希望使用哪種語言，我們將安排工作人員與您聯絡。點擊「與我們聊天」按鍵，該按鍵顯示在網站的各個頁面上。或者前往 **macmillan.org.uk/talktous**

Macmillan 網站
我們的網站有很多關於癌症的英文資訊。如果您想以其他語言進一步瞭解癌症，請瀏覽 **macmillan.org.uk/translations**

我們亦可以為您安排翻譯。請發電子郵件至：
cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk，告訴我們您需要的資訊。

資訊中心
我們的資訊和援助中心設在醫院、圖書館和流動中心。前往任何一個中心以獲取您需要的資訊並與工作人員面對面交談。瀏覽 **macmillan.org.uk/informationcentres** 查找離您最近的中心或致電 **0808 808 00 00** 聯絡我們。

本地支援團體
您可以在支援團體中與其他受癌症影響的人交流。瀏覽 **macmillan.org.uk/supportgroups** 查找離您最近的援助團體或致電 **0808 808 00 00** 聯絡我們。

Macmillan 網上社群
您亦可以前往 **macmillan.org.uk/community** 與其他受癌症影響的人士交流。不論是白天還是夜晚，您都可以隨時使用該服務。您可以分享您的經驗、提出問題，或者只是閱讀其他人的帖子。

詞語清單

詞語	**英語**	**英語發音**	**意思**
良性	Benign	唄耐	體內的一個腫塊，不是癌症，不會擴散到身體的其他任何地方。
細胞	Cells	塞爾斯	我們身體的器官及組織的微小組成部分。
中心導管	Central line	森抽・賴	插入到您胸部大靜脈中的細管。通常用於化療過程中。一端留在體外。
便秘	Constipation	控斯特培順	排便（上廁所）困難或痛苦時。也可能排便沒有往常頻繁，或大便較硬，成塊狀。
痊愈	Cured	庫爾得	當體內沒有癌細胞時。
腹瀉	Diarrhoea	戴爾瑞雅	出現軟便或水便。可能需要頻繁或緊急如厕。可能出現肚痛。
淋巴系統	Lymphatic system	淋發剔克・西斯頓	整個身體的淋巴管和腺體網路，幫助對抗感染。
惡性	Malignant	瑪利能特	體內的一個腫塊，是癌症，可以擴展至身體四周。
PICC 導管	PICC line	PICC 賴	插入到您胳膊靜脈中的短細插管通常用於化療過程中。一端留在體外。
血小板	Platelets	噗類特勒斯	幫助血液凝結的細胞。
放射治療	Radiotherapy	瑞迪歐色拉皮	使用高能 X 光殺死癌細胞的癌症治療方法。
紅血球	Red blood cells	瑞得・布拉德・塞爾斯	我們血液中為全身攜帶氧氣的細胞。
副作用	Side effects	塞德・依發克斯	因癌症治療而產生的不良影響。例如，脫髮、感到虛弱或疲勞。大多數副作用會在治療結束後消失。
手術	Surgery	撒卓瑞	進行手術。

腫瘤	Tumour	圖摩	以異常方式生長的細胞群。異常細胞不斷繁殖並形成腫塊。
白血球	White blood cells	外特・布拉德・塞爾斯	我們血液中抵抗感染的細胞。

更多繁體中文版資訊

我們提供更多有關下列主題的繁體中文資訊：

癌症類型	**與癌症共存**
• 乳癌 • 大腸癌 • 肺癌 • 前列腺癌 **治療** • 化療 • 放射治療 • 手術	• 癌症與新冠病毒 • 如果您患有癌症，可申請的福利 • 飲食問題與癌症 • 生命的終點 • 健康飲食 • 患癌時獲得費用幫助 • 若您被確診患有癌症 - 快速指南 • 敗血症和癌症 • 癌症治療的副作用 • 疲倦（疲勞）與癌症

若想查看該資訊，請瀏覽 **macmillan.org.uk/translations**

參考文獻與致謝

本資訊由麥克米倫癌症援助機構（Macmillan Cancer Support）癌症資訊開發團隊編寫和編輯。由翻譯公司提供繁體中文的翻譯版本。

本資訊以 Macmillan 宣傳冊**《瞭解化療》**為基礎編製而成。我們可以將副本發送給您，但完整手冊只有英語版本。

本資訊經有關專家審查，並獲得我們的首席醫療編輯蒂姆·艾弗森博士、醫學腫瘤學顧問及Macmillan 首席醫療編輯的批准。

同時感謝審閱本資訊的癌症患者。

我們所有的資訊都是依據可獲得的最佳證據。關於我們所用資源的更多資訊，請透過 **bookletfeedback@macmillan.org.uk** 聯絡我們。

MAC12464 _繁體中文

內容審閱日期：2022 年

預定下次審閱日期：2025 年

Trusted Information Creator

Patient Information Forum

Chemotherapy

This information is about chemotherapy.

Any words that are underlined are explained in the word list at the end. The word list also includes how to say the words in English.

Many people with cancer will have chemotherapy as part of their treatment.

Some people also have other treatments such as surgery, radiotherapy, targeted therapies or other anti-cancer drugs. The doctors at the hospital will talk to you about your treatment. We also have information in your language about these treatments.

If you have any questions about this information, ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist at the hospital where you are having treatment.

You can also call Macmillan Cancer Support on freephone **0808 808 00 00**, 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm. We have interpreters, so you can speak to us in your own language. When you call us, please tell us in English which language you need.

There is more cancer information in other languages at **macmillan.org.uk/translations**

This information is about:

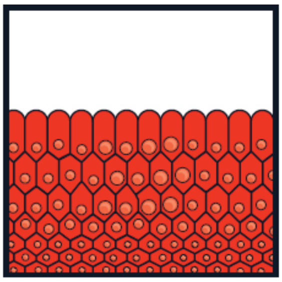
- What is cancer?
- What is chemotherapy?
- When is chemotherapy used?
- Having chemotherapy
- Understanding your treatment
- Tests before treatment
- Where will you have treatment?
- How long does treatment take?
- Changes to your treatment plan
- Side effects
- Other important information
- Getting the right care and support for you
- How Macmillan can help you
- Word list
- More information in your language
- References and thanks

What is cancer?

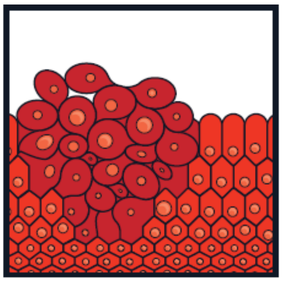
Cancer starts in the cells in our body. Cells are tiny building blocks that make up the body’s organs and tissues. Cells receive signals from the body, telling them when to grow and when to divide to make new cells. This is how our bodies grow and heal. These cells can become old, damaged or no longer needed. When this happens, the cell gets a signal from the body to stop working and die.

Sometimes these signals can go wrong, and the cell becomes abnormal. The abnormal cell may keep dividing to make more and more abnormal cells. These can form a lump, called a tumour.

Normal cells



Cells forming a tumour



Not all tumours are cancer. A tumour that is not cancer (a benign tumour) may grow, but it cannot spread to anywhere else in the body. It usually only causes problems if it grows and presses on nearby organs.

A tumour that is cancer (a malignant tumour) can grow into nearby tissue.

Cancer cells sometimes break away from the first cancer and travel through the blood or lymphatic system to other parts of the body. Cancer cells that spread and develop into a tumour somewhere else in the body are called a secondary cancer.

What is chemotherapy?

Chemotherapy drugs damage cancer cells so that they die. Healthy cells can also be damaged but they will usually repair themselves.

Chemotherapy can be given in different ways. You may have one or more drugs during your treatment. Most chemotherapy drugs are carried in the blood. This means they can reach cancer cells anywhere in the body.

When is chemotherapy used?

Chemotherapy can be used on its own or with other types of treatment such as targeted therapies, surgery or radiotherapy. It can be given:

- as the main treatment for certain types of cancer
- before other treatments, to make the cancer smaller
- at the same time as other treatments
- after other treatments, to try to stop the cancer coming back
- to help someone feel better or live longer, if the cancer cannot be cured.

Chemotherapy is also sometimes used to treat conditions that are not cancer.

Having chemotherapy

You will usually have your chemotherapy as a course of treatment sessions. Each session is followed by some rest days when you have no chemotherapy. This is called a **cycle** of treatment. The number of cycles you have depends on what type of cancer you have. Your cancer doctor will talk to you about how many cycles you need.

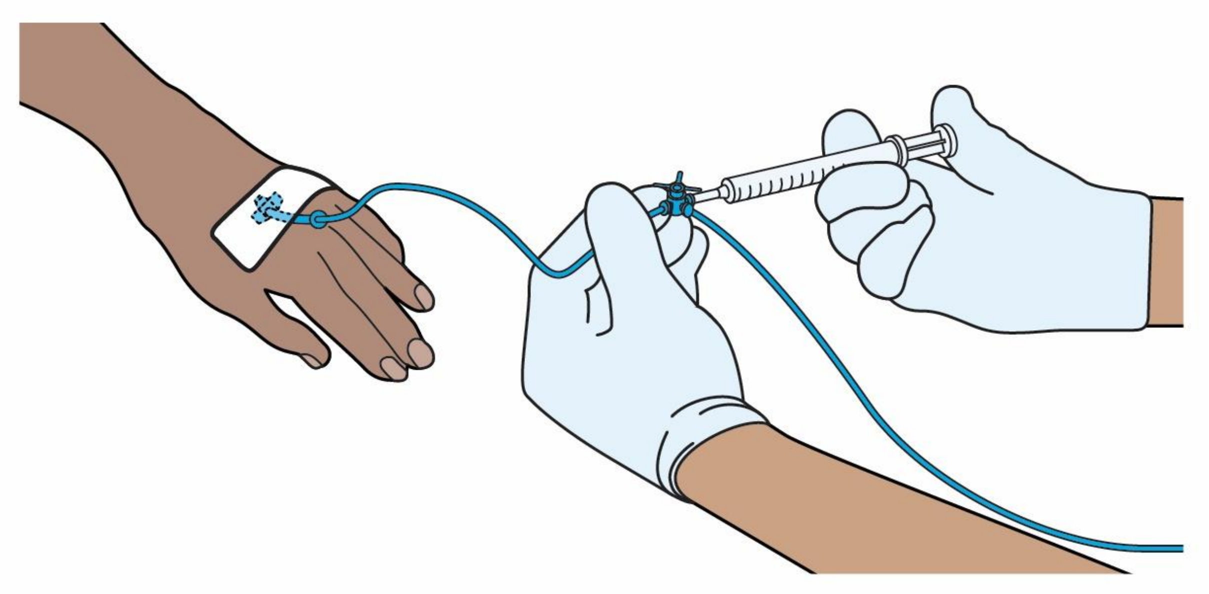
Chemotherapy drugs can be given in different ways. They can be given:

- as an injection or drip into a vein
- as tablets or capsules
- by injection under the skin
- by injection into a muscle
- by injection into the fluid around the spine (intrathecal chemotherapy)
- into an area such as the bladder
- as a cream for some skin cancers.

Having chemotherapy into a vein

Most chemotherapy drugs are given into a vein. They are usually given through a small tube called a cannula. The nurse will put the cannula into a vein in your hand or arm. The nurse will then connect the cannula to either a fluid bag or a syringe with chemotherapy inside. The cannula will be taken out before you go home.

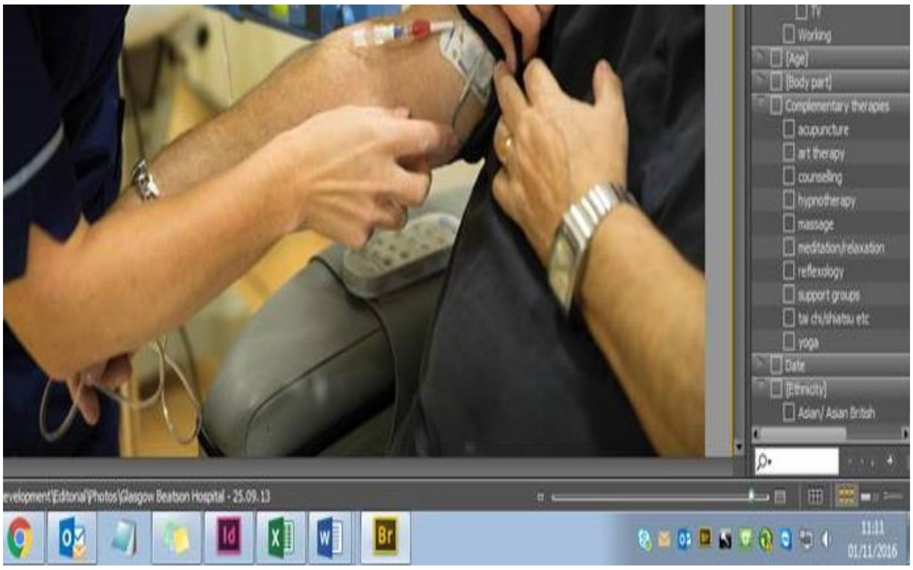
A cannula:



Chemotherapy can also be given through a tube in your arm or chest. A line in your arm is called a PICC line. A line in your chest is called a central line. The line stays in during your treatment. Your nurse will talk to you about this if you need one.

A central line:

A PICC line:



Many people worry that chemotherapy will be painful, or that they will feel different when it is being given. Having chemotherapy into a vein should not be painful, so tell your nurse straight away if it hurts.

Sometimes, a portable pump can be used to give chemotherapy at home.

Having chemotherapy as tablets
Chemotherapy tablets can be taken at home. Only some types of chemotherapy are tablets. It is important to remember that they can still have side effects.

Understanding your treatment

Before you have treatment, your doctor, nurse or pharmacist will explain:

- why you need it
- how often you will have it
- the possible side effects
- how you may feel after the treatment.

No treatment should be given unless you understand why you are having it and how you may feel. You will be asked to sign a form to show that you agree to the treatment and understand its possible side effects. This is called a consent form.

It is a good idea to take someone with you who speaks both your language and English. The hospital may have interpreters, but try to ask for one in advance if you would like one.

Many people are worried at the thought of having chemotherapy. It can help to ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist any questions you have about your treatment.

Tests before treatment

You may need some tests before starting your treatment. These help the doctors check that you are well enough to have your treatment. These usually include blood tests and maybe checks of your kidneys or heart. Sometimes, you may need to have x-rays or scans. You will also have your height and weight measured. If you could be pregnant, you may be asked to take a pregnancy test.

Before each treatment, you may have a blood test. This may be on the day of your treatment or a day or two before. Your doctor or nurse will check your blood results and ask you how you have felt since your last treatment.

Where will you have treatment?

You usually have treatment in a day unit or a hospital ward. Sometimes you can have it at home. You can talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist about where you will have treatment. It is important to make sure that this is the safest place for you to have it. You may need to travel for your treatment. Talk to your nurse if you need help getting to hospital or if you need help with the cost of travelling there.

How long does treatment take?

You can usually have chemotherapy into a vein as a ‘day patient’. This means you do not need to stay overnight and you can go home after the treatment. Treatment may take from half an hour to a few hours. Some people may need to stay in hospital for a short time.

Your course of treatment will usually last for a few months. This will depend on what type of cancer you have.

Changes to your treatment plan

Your doctors use tests to check the effect of the treatment on your body. Sometimes your treatment may need to be delayed or changed to give your body time to recover. Your doctor will talk to you about this.

Side effects

Chemotherapy drugs can cause side effects that make you feel unwell. This is because they affect healthy cells in your body. Most side effects will get better after treatment ends, but some can last longer. Your doctor, nurse or pharmacist will talk to you about any side effects you may get.

Different drugs cause different side effects. Some people have very few side effects while others may have more.

We describe the most common side effects here. It is unlikely that you will get all of these. If you notice any side effects which are not listed here, or if you have any questions about side effects, ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

Your nurse will give you telephone numbers so you can call the hospital if you feel unwell or need advice. You can call any time of the day or night. Save these numbers in your phone or keep them somewhere safe.

Infection

Chemotherapy can reduce the number of white blood cells in your blood. This is called neutropenia. This makes you more likely to get an infection.

Contact the hospital straight away on the contact number you’ve been given if:

- your temperature goes over 37.5°C (99.5°F)
- you suddenly feel unwell, even with a normal temperature
- your temperature goes below 36°C (96.8°F).
- you have symptoms of an infection, such as:
    - feeling hot or cold
    - feeling shaky
    - a sore throat
    - a cough or feeling short of breath
    - diarrhoea
    - needing to pee a lot.

Your white blood cells usually return to normal before your next treatment. You will have a blood test before having more chemotherapy. If your white blood cells are still low, your doctor may delay your treatment for a short time.

Sometimes you may have injections of a drug called G-CSF to help your bone marrow make more white blood cells.

Anaemia

Chemotherapy can reduce the number of red blood cells in your blood. This can make you feel tired and breathless. Tell your doctor or nurse if you feel like this. You may need to be given extra red blood cells (blood transfusion). Or your doctor may give you drugs to help your body make more red blood cells.

Bruising and bleeding

Chemotherapy can reduce the number of platelets in your blood. Platelets are cells that help the blood to clot. Tell your doctor or nurse if you have any bruising or bleeding. This includes nosebleeds, bleeding gums, blood spots or rashes on the skin. Some people may need to be given extra platelets.

Tiredness

Feeling very tired is a common side effect. It is often worse towards the end of treatment. It can last for some time after your treatment finishes. Try to get as much rest as you need. It helps to also do some gentle exercise such as short walks. If you feel sleepy, do not drive or operate machines.

Feeling sick or being sick

You might feel sick if you have chemotherapy. Your doctor may give you anti-sickness drugs (medicine) to help. Take them exactly as your doctor, nurse or pharmacist explains to you. If you still feel sick, contact the hospital as soon as possible. They can give you advice and change the medicine to one that works better for you.

Hair loss

Many people find this side effect very upsetting. Not all chemotherapy drugs make your hair fall out. Some drugs make some hair fall out. Others can make all of your hair fall out. This can include body hair too. Your doctor or nurse will explain what might happen. They can also give you advice on how to look after your hair and scalp. You can also ask about getting a wig or hairpiece.

If your hair falls out, it usually happens 2 to 3 weeks after starting treatment. Sometimes it can happen within a few days. Hair usually grows back over a few months once you finish treatment.

You may be able to reduce hair loss by using something called scalp cooling or a cold cap. This lowers the temperature of your scalp during treatment. Not everyone can have scalp cooling, but you can ask your nurse whether it would be useful for you.

Constipation

Chemotherapy can cause constipation. Drinking lots of fluids, eating foods with lots of fibre, and taking gentle exercise can help. If you still have constipation, you may need to take a medicine called a laxative. Your doctor can give these to you.

Diarrhoea

Chemotherapy can also cause diarrhoea. Your doctor or nurse will tell you if this might happen with your treatment. They will also tell you when you should contact the hospital if this happens. There are medicines that can help. It is important to drink plenty of fluids if you have diarrhoea.

Sore mouth

Your mouth may become sore or dry, or you may notice small ulcers. Drinking lots of fluids and cleaning your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush can help.

Try to avoid hot and spicy foods that can irritate your mouth. Tell your doctor or nurse if your mouth feels sore. They will check for infection and may give you a mouthwash or medicine to help.

Loss of appetite

Some people lose their appetite. This may last a few days or longer. If you think you are not eating enough, or if you are losing weight, talk to your doctor or nurse. They can suggest ways to increase your appetite and keep to a healthy weight.

Taste changes

You may notice that food tastes different. Some people get a strange taste in their mouth. Sucking on sugar-free sweets or mints may help. Normal taste usually comes back after treatment finishes.

Effects on the nerves

Some chemotherapy drugs can damage some nerves in the body. This can cause numbness, tingling or pain. This feeling usually starts in the fingers and toes. Tell your doctor or nurse if this happens. This usually improves after treatment has finished. For some people, it can last longer.

It’s important to let your doctor know straight away if you feel unwell or have any severe side effects, even if they’re not mentioned here.

Other important information

Blood clots

Both cancer and chemotherapy can increase the chance of developing a blood clot. A blood clot can cause:

- pain, redness or swelling in an arm or leg
- breathlessness or coughing
- chest pain.

Contact your doctor straight away if you have any of these symptoms. A blood clot is serious but your doctor can treat it with drugs. Your doctor or nurse can give you more information.

Other medicines

Some medicines can affect chemotherapy or be harmful when you are having it. This includes medicines you can buy in a shop or chemist. Tell your cancer doctor about any drugs you are prescribed or buy, including vitamins, herbal drugs and complementary therapies.

Fertility

Your treatment may affect your ability to get pregnant or make someone pregnant. If you are worried about this, talk to your doctor or nurse before treatment starts.

Contraception

Your doctor will advise you not to become pregnant or make someone pregnant during treatment. The chemotherapy may harm a developing baby. It is important to use contraception during your treatment.

Sex

If you have sex within the first couple of days of having chemotherapy, you need to use a condom or a dental dam. This is to protect your partner from the chemotherapy drugs. Talk to your doctor or nurse if you are worried about this.

Breastfeeding

You should not breastfeed during treatment or for some time after. This is because chemotherapy could be passed to a baby through breast milk.

Medical and dental treatment

If you need to go into hospital for any reason other than cancer, always tell the doctors and nurses that you are having chemotherapy. Tell them the name of your cancer doctor so they can ask for advice.

Talk to your cancer doctor or nurse if you need dental treatment. Always tell your dentist you are having chemotherapy.

Vaccinations

Vaccinations can reduce your risk of getting certain infections. Doctors usually recommend that people with cancer have a flu vaccination and a coronavirus vaccination. These are both inactivated vaccinations that can help reduce the risk of infection. People with weak immune systems can have these, as they are not live vaccinations.

If your immune system is weak, you need to avoid live vaccinations. This is because they can make you unwell.

Travel

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you are planning to travel abroad during treatment. You may not be able to have certain vaccines. They will also check if it is safe for you to fly.

Remember to take extra care in the sun. Some chemotherapy drugs can make your skin more likely to burn.

Working during chemotherapy

You may need to take time off work during chemotherapy. Some people need to keep working for financial reasons. Your doctor or nurse can give you advice and tell you about support that is available. We have information about work and cancer and about claiming benefits if you cannot work.

Getting the right care and support for you

If you have cancer and do not speak English, you may be worried that this will affect your cancer treatment and care. But your healthcare team should offer you care, support and information that meets your needs.

We know that sometimes people may face extra challenges in getting the right support. For example, if you work or have a family it can be hard to find time to go to hospital appointments. You might also have worries about money and transport costs. All of this can be stressful and hard to cope with.

But help is available. Our free support line **0808 808 00 00** can offer advice, in your language, about your situation. You can speak to nurses, financial guides, welfare rights advisers and work support advisers.

We also offer Macmillan Grants to people with cancer. These are one-off payments that can be used for things like hospital parking, travel costs, childcare or heating bills.

How Macmillan can help you

At Macmillan, we know how a cancer diagnosis can affect everything, and we are here to support you.

Macmillan Support Line
We have interpreters, so you can speak to us in your language. Just tell us, in English, the language you want to use. We can help with medical questions, give you information about financial support, or be there to listen if you need someone to talk to. The free, confidential phone line is open 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm. Call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

Web chat
You can send us a web chat message saying you would like an interpreter. Tell us, in English, the language you need, and we will arrange for someone to contact you. Click on the 'Chat to us' button, which appears on pages across the website. Or go to **macmillan.org.uk/talktous**

Macmillan website
Our website has lots of information in English about cancer. There is also more information in other languages at **macmillan.org.uk/translations**

We can also arrange translations just for you. Email us at **cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk** to tell us what you need.

Information centres
Our information and support centres are based in hospitals, libraries and mobile centres. Visit one to get the information you need and speak with someone face to face. Find your nearest centre at **macmillan.org.uk/informationcentres** or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

Local support groups
At a support group, you can talk to other people affected by cancer. Find out about support groups in your area at **macmillan.org.uk/supportgroups** or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

Macmillan Online Community
You can also talk to other people affected by cancer online at **macmillan.org.uk/community** You can access it at any time of day or night. You can share your experiences, ask questions, or just read through people's posts.

Word list

Word	Meaning
Benign	A lump in the body that is not cancer and cannot spread to anywhere else in the body.
Cells	The tiny building blocks that make up the organs and tissues of our body.
Central line	A thin tube that goes into a vein in your chest. It is used to give chemotherapy. One end stays outside the body.
Constipation	When you find it difficult or painful to poo. You might not be going as often as usual, or your poo might be hard and lumpy.
Cured	When there are no cancer cells left in the body.
Diarrhoea	When you have soft or watery poo. You might need the toilet more than usual or very urgently. You may also have tummy pain.
Lymphatic system	A network of vessels and glands throughout the body that helps to fight infection.
Malignant	A lump in the body that is cancer and can spread around the body.
PICC line	A thin tube that goes into a vein in your arm. It is used to give chemotherapy. One end stays outside the body.
Platelets	Cells that help the blood to clot.
Radiotherapy	A cancer treatment that uses high-energy x-rays to kill cancer cells.
Red blood cells	Cells in our blood that carry oxygen around the body.
Side effects	Unwanted effects of cancer treatment. For example, hair loss, feeling sick or tiredness. Most side effects go away after treatment finishes.
Surgery	Having an operation.
Tumour	A group of cells that are growing in an abnormal way. The abnormal cells keep multiplying and form a lump.
White blood cells	Cells in our blood that fight infection.

More information in your language

We have information in your language about these topics:

Types of cancer

- Breast cancer
- Large bowel cancer
- Lung cancer
- Prostate cancer

Treatments

- Chemotherapy
- Radiotherapy
- Surgery

Living with cancer

- Cancer and coronavirus
- Claiming benefits when you have cancer
- Eating problems and cancer
- End of life
- Healthy eating
- Help with costs when you have cancer
- If you’re diagnosed with cancer – A quick guide
- Sepsis and cancer
- Side effects of cancer treatment
- Tiredness (fatigue) and cancer

To see this information, go to **macmillan.org.uk/translations**

References and thanks

This information has been written and edited by Macmillan Cancer Support’s Cancer Information Development team. It has been translated by a translation company.

The information included is based on the Macmillan booklet **Understanding chemotherapy**. We can send you a copy, but the full booklet is only available in English.

This information has been reviewed by relevant experts and approved by our Chief Medical Editor, Professor Tim Iveson, Consultant Medical Oncologist and Macmillan Chief Medical Editor.

Thanks also to the people affected by cancer who reviewed this information.

All our information is based on the best evidence available. For more information about the sources we use, please contact us at **bookletfeedback@macmillan.org.uk**

MAC12464_Chinese (Traditional)

Content reviewed: 2022

Next planned review: 2025

Trusted
Information
Creator

Patient Information Forum