

Name of Child: _____ Date: _____

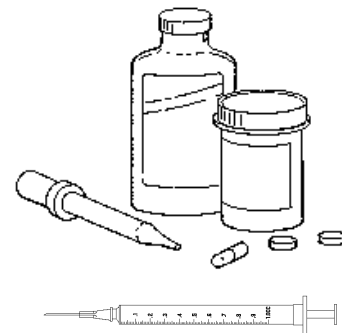
About Chemotherapy

Chemotherapy is medicine used to kill cancer cells. There are over 50 chemotherapy medicines. Some come from plants or vitamins, some are chemicals, some are antibiotics. Some of these work alone, and some work best when used with other medicines.

All body cells, even cancer cells, grow by getting bigger, then splitting in half (**dividing**). Each half grows and becomes a whole cell. Each time the cells split, there are twice as many cells. Both healthy cells and cancer cells grow this way. Chemotherapy kills the cancer cells by making it hard for them to divide.

Chemotherapy works when the medicine gets into the blood and flows through the body to the cancer cells. There are several ways medicine can enter the blood:

- by mouth
- by shots (injection)
- through a vein
- through a spinal tap



**There are several ways
medicine can
enter the blood.**

Since chemotherapy travels through the blood, it can reach cancer cells all through the body. All the cells in the body that are dividing take up this medicine. The cancer cells are killed by the chemotherapy. Healthy cells that are dividing can fix the damage the medicine causes, and live.

Each of the different chemotherapy medicines hurt cancer cells in different ways. Each may attack the cell at different points as it is dividing. When several medicines are combined, the cancer cells are attacked at many points as they grow.

The parts of the body that grow the most (blood, hair, lining of the mouth and gut) have cells that divide often. The chemotherapy is taken up by the cancer cells, and these growing parts of the body. When healthy cells take up the medicine, it causes the side effects of chemotherapy. The damage to these healthy cells usually does not last. Most side effects go away when the treatment is over.

How a cancer is treated depends on

- what type of cancer is it?
- where is the cancer in the body?
- has the cancer spread?
- what the cancer cells look like under the

microscope?

The answers to these questions will help your doctor decide what treatment is best for your child's cancer. Ask your nurse or doctor what medicines your child will get, what side effects he or she may get from this medicine, and what the treatment will be. If you want more information about side effects of chemotherapy, ask your nurse or doctor for the handout: **Side Effects of Chemotherapy and How We Treat Them, #735.**



**Ask your nurse or doctor
what medicines
your child will get.**

Now that you've read this:

- Tell your nurse or doctor what chemotherapy is, and how it works. (Check when done.)



If you have any questions or concerns,
 call your child's doctor or call _____

Disclaimer

The information provided at this site is intended to be general information, and is provided for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of examination, treatment, or consultation with a physician. Phoenix Children's Hospital urges you to contact your physician with any questions you may have about a medical condition.

If you want to know more about child health and illness,
visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children's Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
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(866) 933-6459
www.phoenixchildrens.com

Friday, January 4, 2008 • DRAFT to family review
#734 • Written by Sharon Jerdonek, RN and Sharon Denny, RN • Illustrated by Dennis Swain
This handout has been expert reviewed by
M. Etzel, MD; S. Patinella, RPh; E. Troell, RPh; L. Wagner, RN; and M. Lehrich, RN.
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The Emily Center

About Chemotherapy

Medication

Si usted desea esta información en español, por favor pídasela a su enfermero o doctor.

Name of Health Care Provider: _____ Number: 734
For office use: Date returned: _____ db nb

Family Review of Handout

Health care providers: Please teach families with this handout.

Families: Please let us know what you think of this handout.

Would you say this handout is hard to read? Yes No

easy to read? Yes No

Please circle the parts of the handout that were hard to understand.

Would you say this handout is interesting to read? Yes No

Why or why not?

Would you do anything differently after reading this handout? Yes No

If yes, what?

After reading this handout, do you have any questions about the subject? Yes No

If yes, what?

Is there anything you don't like about the drawings?

Yes No

If yes, what?

What changes would you make in this handout to make it better or easier to understand?

Please return your review of this handout to your nurse or doctor or send it to the address below.

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Thank you for helping us!