

Chemotherapy for Colorectal Cancer Treatment and its Side Effects

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ABOUT THE STUDY

Chemotherapy (chemo) is an anti-cancer treatment in which anti-cancer medications are injected into a vein or taken orally. These medications are absorbed into the circulation and reach almost every organ of the body. Colorectal cancer is frequently treated with chemotherapy.

Chemotherapy may be used at various times during colorectal cancer treatment:

- Adjuvant chemo-Adjuvant chemo is given after surgery. The objective is to destroy cancer cells that were left behind after surgery because they were too small to detect, as well as cancer cells that fled from the main colon or rectal cancer and settled in other areas of the body but are too small to notice on imaging tests. This reduces the risk of the cancer reoccurring.
- Neoadjuvant chemo-It is given before surgery (sometimes with radiation) to try to shrink the cancer and make it easier to remove. This procedure is frequently used to treat rectal cancer.

Chemotherapy can be used to decrease tumours and alleviate effects created by advanced cancers that have spread to other organs such as the liver. While it is unlikely to cure cancer, it can make individuals feel better and help them live longer.

Chemotherapy is given in different ways to treat colorectal cancer.

- Systemic chemotherapy-Drugs are injected directly into the blood through a vein or taken orally. The drugs travel through your blood to almost every part of your body.
- Regional chemotherapy-Drugs are injected directly into an artery that goes to the cancerous area of the body. This concentrates chemo on certain cancer cells. By restricting the quantity of medicine that reaches the rest of your body, it decreases side effects. Hepatic artery infusion, or chemotherapy given directly into the hepatic artery, is a form of regional chemotherapy that is sometimes used to treat cancer that has migrated to the liver.

Chemotherapy drugs that are used to treat colorectal cancer include:

- 5-Fluorouracil (5-FU)
- Capecitabine (Xeloda), a drug that is changed into 5-FU once it gets to the tumor cell.
- Irinotecan (Camptosar)
- Oxaliplatin (Eloxatin)
- Trifluridine and tipiracil (Lonsurf), a combination of drug in pill based form.

Combinations of two or three of these drugs are most commonly used. Chemotherapy drugs are given along with targeted therapy drug.

Side effects of chemotherapy

Chemotherapy drugs targets cells that are dividing quickly, which is why they work against cancer cells. Other cells in the body, such as those in hair follicles and the lining of the mouth and intestines, are dividing at a rapid rate as well. Chemotherapy can also impact these cells, resulting in side effects.

The side effects of chemotherapy depend on the type and dose of drugs given and how long you take them. Common side effects of chemotherapy include:

- Sores in the mouth
- Appetite loss or weight loss
- Vomiting and nausea
- Diarrhea
- Changes in nail colour
- Changes in the skin

Chemotherapy can potentially harm the bone marrow's blood-forming cells, resulting in:

- Infection risk is increased (from low white blood cell counts)
- Bruising or bleeding
- Tiredness (from low red blood cell counts and other reasons)
- Other adverse effects are from certain medications such as Hand-foot syndrome, Neuropathy, Allergic or sensitivity reactions.

The majority of these side effects go away when treatment is ended. Some side effects, such as oxaliplatin-induced numbness in the hands and feet, might continue for long period. There are often techniques to reduce the severity of these side effects. For

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example, you can be given drugs to prevent or reduce nausea and vomiting, or you may be instructed to put ice cubes in your

mouth while receiving chemotherapy to reduce the risk of developing mouth sores.