

Information Sheet: Chemoradiation

This information sheet includes some questions that you may want to discuss with your healthcare team. Space is provided for you to take notes. Keep this sheet with you so that you can review the information at your next appointment and can add additional details if anything changes.



RADIATION

It works by directing a high energy x-ray beam at the tumour and nearby lymph nodes to interfere with dividing tumour cells by either killing them or stopping the cells from growing and reproducing.

Radiation therapy is delivered with a linear accelerator which is used to generate and give high energy x-rays. You will probably receive radiation therapy five days a week for 6-7 weeks. The length of your appointments may vary from 15 - 45 minutes, but you will only receive radiation for 10 - 15 minutes.



CHEMOTHERAPY

It uses drugs to destroy cancer cells or slow their growth. This treatment is given through an infusion into the bloodstream in order to reach cancer cells all over the body. Some chemotherapy also act as a “radio-sensitizer” and can make cancer cells more sensitive to the killing effects of the radiotherapy.

Chemotherapy treatments will most likely be delivered intravenously (through the vein), in your arm, at a hospital, clinic, or infusion centre. The exact schedule for administration depends on the specific type of chemotherapy you will receive.

How often will I need to go to the hospital, clinic, or infusion centre?

Your treatment schedule will depend on the specific drugs that you are prescribed. Your healthcare team will give you a detailed treatment schedule for both chemotherapy and radiotherapy. On days when you receive both chemotherapy and radiation therapy, your healthcare team will coordinate the two treatments.

What tests are required and how often do I need to do them?

Your healthcare team will let you know which tests you will need to have done. Usually, a blood test is done the day before or on the day of each treatment. The dose and timing of your chemotherapy may change depending on the results of your blood test or the side effects.

How will I know if the chemoradiation is working?

A CT scan will be done after you complete chemoradiation and before you start treatment with immunotherapy. You may also have additional CT scans during the course of your treatment with immunotherapy.

Will I need additional medication?

Depending on the type of chemotherapy you receive and your side effects, you will receive additional medications (e.g. to help prevent nausea or to help you manage any side effects). You may also receive medication to help manage side effects of radiation. Your healthcare team will describe these to you.

How will this impact activities of my daily life?

For almost all patients, the impact of untreated cancer will be far worse than the impact your treatment will have on activities in your daily life. During your treatment you may be unable to drive or work, care for other family members, or engage in some of your regular activities. Ask your healthcare team about how your treatment may impact you.

Are you **CLEAR** on your treatment journey and **COMFORTABLE** to proceed with chemoradiation and immunotherapy treatment?



Space to write additional questions or information: _____
