



## Chemotherapy and Side Effects

Chemotherapy uses drugs to kill cancer cells. It can stop the growth of a tumor in the breast and kill cancer cells that have spread to other parts of the body. It usually begins four to six weeks after surgery. It can be given in many ways. A few of the drugs can be given by mouth, but most are injected into a vein (intravenous or IV). Chemotherapy may also be given before surgery. Answers to these questions will help you understand the need for chemotherapy.

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**Q:** Why do I need chemotherapy?

**A:**

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**Q:** When should I begin chemotherapy?

**A:**

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**Q:** What drugs will I take and why?

**A:**

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**Q:** How will the chemotherapy be given? How many treatments will I have?

**A:**

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**Q:** If I have to go to the hospital for the treatment, how long will each treatment take? Will I need someone to go with me?

**A:**

**Q: What are the possible side effects? How long will they last?  
What are the long-term risks?**

**A:**

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**Q: Are there medicines I can take to prevent or treat side effects?**

**A:**

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**Q: Which side effects should I report to you?**

**A:**

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**Q: Are there any integrative and complementary therapies that may help me cope with side effects?**

**A:**

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**Q: During treatment, will I be able to continue my normal activities (work, exercise, etc.)?**

**A:**

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**Q: Is chemotherapy covered by health insurance?**

**A:**

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For more information on breast health or breast cancer, please call our breast care helpline (1-877-465-6636) or visit our website. Susan G. Komen does not provide medical advice.

**[www.komen.org](http://www.komen.org) 1-877 GO KOMEN**