

VENTURA COUNTY HEMATOLOGY
ONCOLOGY SPECIALISTS
(VCHOS)

PATIENT GUIDE FOR
CANCER THERAPY

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How to Reach Us When You Have Questions or Concerns

If you have a **medical emergency** that requires immediate assistance, please call 911.

For Questions During Office Hours: 8:00am – 5:00pm, Monday – Friday

If you need to speak with a nurse or physician during office hours, please call (805) 485-8709.

The nurses' station extension for IV infusions/injections is 136.

The nurses' station extension for oral treatments is 123.

If you reach the nurses voice mail, the nurses are assisting another client. Please leave a brief message with your name and phone number, and the nursing staff will return your call. The voice mail is checked every hour during the day.

For non-urgent questions, you may email the nursing staff at nurse@venturaoncology.com. This email address is also checked every hour during business hours.

For Urgent Medical Issues After Office Hours or on weekends:

You may contact the on-call physician by dialing (805) 485-8709 and entering option 1.

For Prescription Refills:

If you need a prescription refill, please check with your pharmacy. Refills may already be available. If not, your pharmacy will contact your physician on your behalf. Please allow 48 hours for prescription refills.

To refill medications filled at our in-house dispensary, please call Lisa Day at ext 126

Pain medication refills require a special prescription and cannot be called into a pharmacy or filled after hours or on a weekend. Please allow adequate time for refills.

For Questions Regarding Appointment Scheduling:

Please contact your physician coordinator at the following extensions:

Physician	Patient Care Coordinator	Extension
Dr. Kong	Gracie A	220
Dr. Chang	Keri R	252
Dr. Dalsania	Lisa G	273
Dr. Yates	Vanessa	253
Dr. Mortazavi	JC	283
PA/NP coordinator		222
Chemotherapy Camarillo	Erica	128
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What You Should Know Before Your Treatment

There are many different types of treatments that can be used to treat cancer. In addition to chemotherapy, immunotherapy, targeted therapy, and hormone therapy may also be recommended. Cancer treatment comes in many forms and can be given in these ways:

- An IV (intravenously) in your arm or through a central line, such as a port-a-cath
- A shot into your muscle or other part of your body
- A pill or liquid that you swallow
- A cream that is rubbed on your skin

Chemotherapy is a cancer treatment that uses drugs to destroy cancer cells. It is also called “chemo.” Chemotherapy can be used to destroy cancer cells, stop cancer cells from spreading, or slow the growth of cancer cells.

Immunotherapy is a type of cancer treatment that helps your immune system fight cancer. Some immunotherapy treatments help the immune system stop or slow the growth of cancer cells. Others help the immune system destroy cancer cells or stop the cancer from spreading to other parts of the body. Immunotherapy treatments can be used alone or combined with other cancer treatments.

Hormone therapies are used to treat cancers that use hormones to grow.

Targeted therapy is a type of treatment that targets the changes in cancer cells that help them grow, divide, and spread. Targeted therapy may be given along with chemotherapy and other treatments.

Personalized Cancer Medicine. You may have heard the terms “personalized medicine.” This means your medical treatment is based on your genes and your specific disease. Many cancers affect or involve specific genes. Personalized cancer medicine often has fewer side effects than other types of treatment because it is designed to be more specific to your cancer.

Clinical Trial. A clinical trial is a research study that involves volunteers. Many cancer clinical trials are looking for a better way to treat cancer by finding a safer, more effective way of destroying cancer cells and keeping them from coming back.

Radiation therapy is the use of high-energy x-rays or other particles to destroy cancer cells. If radiation is recommended in your treatment plan, you will be referred to a Radiation Oncologist in another office.

Treatment Scheduling

You may get chemo treatment every day, every week, or every month. Your treatment schedule and your infusion time may vary depending on what chemotherapy drugs your physician orders. The nursing staff will review your chemotherapy regimen and side effects at your first appointment.

What to Expect During Your Infusion Treatment

There are three Dignity Health infusion centers which are managed by the physicians at VCHOS and are located in Camarillo, Oxnard and Ventura.

All of the infusion centers are equipped with reclining chairs. You are welcome to bring reading materials and/or small electronic portable devices such as iPods or portable DVD players. As a courtesy to others, we ask that you use headphones with electronic devices and limit cell phone use to necessary phone calls only. For your convenience, we offer juices and crackers. However, you are welcome to bring food and snacks with you.

Oral (Pill) Dispensing Information

For your convenience, we offer oral dispensing services for many of the medications our physicians prescribe. We accept a variety of prescription plans and will bill your insurance pharmacy benefit. The co-pay we charge will be the same as if the prescription(s) were filled at any local pharmacy. For your convenience, we will synchronize refills with your office visits whenever possible. For our patients without prescription benefits, we offer cost-saving pricing on many of our prescriptions.

Prior Authorizations & Medication Coverage

Some medications our physicians prescribe may require prior authorization from your insurance company. No matter which pharmacy you choose to utilize, we will need to call the insurance company for authorization (permission) before your insurance will pay for that medication.

Occasionally, your local pharmacy may get a message from your insurance company stating the drug is not covered. In many of these instances, a simple prior authorization is all that is required. Sometimes, your doctor will need to change the medication to another medication that is covered by your insurance.

If your prescription needs a prior authorization, your pharmacy should call us to let us know. Obtaining a prior authorization may take several days. In some instances, approval from the insurance company is given over the phone immediately. In either case, when a

prior authorization is granted, we will call your pharmacy to let them know the insurance will pay and we will call you to tell you the medication has been approved. You will more than likely receive paperwork in the mail from the insurance company informing you of the decision.

Appeals

There may be times when your insurance company will not approve a medication and deny the prior authorization request. At this point, if the doctor deems it necessary, we will initiate an appeal for the denial. This time frame tends to be a bit lengthier. Sometimes an appeal can take a month or longer to be resolved.

Instead of opting for an appeal, your physician may choose to change the medication prescribed to a medication that is covered by your insurance company.

Expensive Co-Pays

If your co-pay is too high and is simply out of your budget, or if your insurance will not approve coverage for the prescription, there are many avenues through which the medication can be obtained. Your doctor may choose to change the medication to something that is comparable with a lower co-pay. Another option is to obtain financial assistance. We are happy to help you if this situation arises.

No matter what the instance is, please do not just pay the high out-of-pocket cost. Call us first so we can work with your pharmacy and insurance company to help you get the medication you need at a price you can afford.

Financial Assistance

There may be financial assistance available for your IV or oral treatment. For assistance, please contact:

Lisa Day	805-485-8709 x126	regarding your oral medication.
Annette A	805-988-2500 x3983	regarding your IV medication.

Safe Storage and Disposal of Cancer Medications

During and after cancer treatment, people may have one or more medications to take at home. These medications can be very harmful if someone other than the person with cancer takes them. Therefore, you and your caregivers need to know the safest ways to store and dispose of specific medications.

- Store your medications separately from those of your other family members.
- Store your medications in the container it came in. This helps you know which one is which and keeps the information about how often to take it right at your fingertips. Always keep the lid tightly closed. If you use a pill box or other type of medication organizer, use one for chemotherapy and one for any other medication(s). Clearly label both boxes.
- Store all chemotherapy in its original container, in a safe place, and away from all other medications. Always keep medications out of the reach of children and/or pets.
- Most oral chemotherapy should be stored at room temperature, away from heat, moisture, and direct sunlight. Some types of chemotherapy require special storage or handling, such as refrigeration. This will be noted on the label and/or package insert
- Keep the local poison control center's telephone number handy in case a pet, child, or other member of your household accidentally swallows the medication. The national number, which will route you to the local center based on your area code, is 800-222-1222.
- You should never throw out or flush leftover chemotherapy. Normally, you will not have extra oral chemotherapy because doctors typically prescribe it in the exact dosage and amount necessary. But if you do have unused oral chemotherapy pills, return it to your doctor or nurse for disposal.

Managing Treatment Side Effects

NAUSEA AND VOMITING

Nausea is when you feel sick to your stomach, like you are going to throw up.

Vomiting is when you throw up.

Helpful Hints

- Take your anti – nausea medicine as prescribed and talk with your doctor or nurse if the medicine is not controlling your nausea.
- Eat less greasy, fried, salty, sweet, or spicy foods
- Eat 5 or 6 small meals during the day, instead of 3 large meals.
- Drink plenty of water, 6 to 8 glasses a day. If you find it hard to drink a full glass at one time, take small sips of water throughout the day.
- These foods and drinks may be easy on your stomach:
 - Clear broth, such as chicken, beef, and vegetable
 - Clear soda such as ginger ale, water, tea, cranberry or grape juice.
 - Oral rehydration solution drinks, such as Pedialyte or Gatorade
 - Oatmeal, Cream of Wheat or Cream of Rice Cereal
 - Crackers, Pretzels, toast, white rice, pasta, noodles, or plain boiled potatoes
 - Broiled or baked chicken without the skin
 - Bananas or canned fruit such as applesauce, peaches or pears
 - Jello, Yogurt, Popsicles or Sherbet

When to Call Your Doctor

- Your anti – nausea medicines are not effective
- You are vomiting and are unable to tolerate fluids for 24 hours

DIARRHEA

Diarrhea is when you have soft, loose, or watery bowel movements.

Call your doctor or nurse if:

- You have diarrhea and cramps for more than 1 day
- You have a fever of 100.5 degrees F or higher
- You feel dizzy
- Your rectal area is sore or bleeds
- The diarrhea does not respond to over the counter or prescribed medication.

Do these things to feel better:

- Eat 5 or 6 small meals each day, instead of 3 large meals
- Eat foods that are easy to digest such as bananas, applesauce, white rice, and white toast
- Drink more liquids each day, at least 8 to 12 cups of clear liquids. This will not stop the diarrhea, but it will help replace fluids you are losing with diarrhea.

- Clean your rectal area with warm water and a baby wipe. Keep the area dry. Ask about creams that can help.
- Take over the counter diarrhea medication, such as Imodium.

Foods to Avoid:

- Dairy products, such as milk, cheese, ice cream, sour cream
- Spicy, greasy, or fried foods
- Foods that cause gas, such as beans, broccoli, or cabbage
- Foods high in fiber, such as whole wheat breads, granola, or bran cereals
- Don't have beer, wine, or any other drinks with alcohol in them
- Don't have caffeine drinks such as coffee, black tea, or colas

CONSTIPATION

Constipation is having bowel movements that come less often than normal for you, are painful or are hard to pass.

Treatment and Prevention of Constipation:

- Eat high fiber foods such as whole grain breads and cereals, fruits and vegetables, nuts, seeds, and popcorn
- Drink lots of liquids, at least 8 cups of liquid every day. Water is a good choice, and so are fruit and vegetable juices, such as prune juice
- Warm liquids such as coffee or tea may help
- Try to be active every day. Walk or ride an exercise bike for 15 to 30 minutes a day
- Medication for constipation, such as colace, miralax or senokot, is available over the counter.
- If you are still having constipation, discuss other medications with your doctor or nurse.

These foods may help if you are constipated:

- **Breads and grains** – Bran muffins, bran or whole grain cereals, brown or wild rice, cooked dried peas and beans (such as pinto, black, red, or kidney), whole wheat bread, whole wheat pasta and tortillas
- **Fruits** – Dried fruit such as apricots, dates, prunes, and raisins, fresh fruit such as apples, blueberries, and grapes
- **Vegetables** – Raw or cooked vegetables, such as broccoli, corn, green beans, peas, and spinach
- **Snacks** – Granola, nuts, popcorn, seeds, such as sunflower

MOUTH AND THROAT CHANGES

Chemotherapy can cause changes in taste or smell, dry mouth, small sores on your gums or tongue, and/or pain when you eat hot or cold foods.

If you have mouth sores, take these steps to feel better:

- Brush your teeth and tongue after each meal and before you go to bed. Use a soft toothbrush
- Use toothpaste or gel that has fluoride and baking soda in it
- Rinse your mouth with a baking soda, salt, and water mixture every 3 hours during the day. Mix together: 1 cup warm water, ¼ teaspoon baking soda, and 1/8 teaspoon salt
- Keep your mouth and lips moist. Use a lip balm, sip water or ice chips, and try drinking through a straw
- Eat soft bland foods, such as cooked cereals, mashed potatoes, or scrambled eggs. Try softening foods with gravy, sauce, or other liquids
- Let hot food cool down

Call your doctor or nurse if you have:

- Trouble eating or swallowing
- White spots in your mouth or on your tongue
- Sores on your lips or in your mouth
- Pain in your mouth or throat

LOW BLOOD CELL COUNTS

Chemotherapy may lead to low blood counts, causing the possibility of a variety of symptoms which depend on which blood cell number is low. Your doctor or nurse will order blood tests. A complete blood count (CBC) is a blood test used to check your blood counts.

ANEMIA

Anemia is when your body doesn't have enough red blood cells. This can also be called low hemoglobin or low hematocrit. Having anemia can make you feel very tired or weak, or cause you to experience headaches, dizziness, or shortness of breath.

Try these tips when you feel tired or weak:

- Save your energy. Choose the most important things to do each day
- Ask for help. When family or friends offer to help, let them. They can take you to the doctor, buy groceries, or make meals,
- Balance rest with activity. Take short naps during the day. Short naps of less than 1 hour are best. Too much bed rest can make you feel weak
- Sleep at least 8 hours every night
- Eat and drink well. You may need to eat high protein foods. Meat, peanut butter, and eggs are good choices. You may also need to eat foods with iron. Red meat, leafy greens (such as collard greens and spinach), and cooked dried beans are good choices. Drink at least 8 cups of liquid every day.

Call your doctor or nurse if you feel:

- Dizzy or faint
- Short of breath
- Very weak or tired
- Your heart is beating very fast, or you have chest pain

If you have anemia, you may need medicine, vitamins or a blood transfusion to help you feel better.

NEUTROPENIA

Neutropenia is a decrease in the number of neutrophils, a type of white blood cell. White blood cells fight infections. A low white blood cell count can make you vulnerable to infections.

Once you start treatment, it is important to be aware of measures you can take to prevent infections:

- Wash your hands well with soap and water. Always wash your hands before

you cook or eat, after you use the restroom, and after being in public places. Have people around you wash their hands as well

- Brush your teeth after meals, and before you go to bed. Use a soft toothbrush
- Try to stay away from germs. Stay away from people who are sick or have a cold. Try to stay away from big crowds
- Wash raw fruits and vegetables and wash your hands well after handling raw meat
- Have someone else clean up after your pet or wear gloves
- Clean yourself well and gently after going to the bathroom. Let your nurse know if your rectal area is sore or bleeds
- Don't squeeze pimples
- Do not use rectal suppositories or take your temperature rectally

Call your doctor or nurse right away if you have:

- Fever that is 100.5⁰ F or higher. Have a thermometer at home to check your temperature
- Shaking chills – check your temperature
- Cough or sore throat
- Headache or a stiff or sore neck
- New or unexplained pain
- Bloody or cloudy urine, or pain or burning when you urinate
- Sores or white coating in your mouth or on your tongue
- Swelling or redness anywhere. Watch for swelling or soreness if you have a catheter

THROMBOCYTOPENIA (Low platelet count)

Platelets help blood to clot to prevent bleeding. When low blood platelet count occurs, tiny drops of blood can leak through the blood vessels, causing red or purple dots on the skin called petechiae (pa-TEE-kee-eye). If low platelet count is present, there is an increased risk of bruising and bleeding.

Possible Symptoms of Thrombocytopenia:

- Increased bruising
- Petechiae (red or purple dots on your skin as described above)
- Bleeding, especially from nose, gums, rectum

Things you may do to decrease your risk of bleeding if you have low platelet count:

- Do not take any medications that interfere with the platelets being able to form a clot such as Aspirin, Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), or Naproxen (Aleve)
- Do not use rectal suppositories, enemas or take your temperature rectally
- Use a very soft bristle toothbrush & use caution or avoid flossing your teeth. If your gums bleed, rinse with cold water. If bleeding does not stop, call your doctor
- Avoid activities such as contact sports, strenuous exercise, or amusement park

rides

- Avoid or limit the use of sharp objects such as knives or razors (electric razors are ok)
- Hold pressure on any cut or scrape for at least 5 minutes

If your platelet count is low, Call Your Doctor if:

- You have bleeding that will not stop after 5 minutes
- Bleeding that occurs spontaneously without injury (Ex: nosebleed)
- You have a fall or experience trauma or injury
- You feel dizzy or lightheaded, or have difficulty seeing or have double vision
- You have new or unexplained pain

HAIR LOSS (Alopecia)

Chemotherapy can harm the cells that make hair. This means that hair on your head and anywhere on your body may fall out. Hair loss is also called “alopecia.” Your hair may start to fall out 2 to 3 weeks after chemotherapy begins.

Before your hair falls out:

- Treat your hair gently. Wash it with a mild shampoo. Pat it dry with a soft towel. Avoid heated appliances such as blow dryers or curling irons
- Some people choose to cut their hair short, or shave their head. If you shave your head, use an electric shaver so you won't cut your scalp
- Get a wig. If you plan to buy a wig or hairpiece, get one while you still have hair. This way, you can match it to the color of your hair
- Many insurance companies will cover the cost of a wig – ask your doctor

After your hair falls out:

- Protect your head from the sun. Use sunscreen or wear a hat when you are outside
- Protect your head from the cold. Wear a hat or scarf
- Try wearing a soft scarf when you sleep
- Most likely, your hair will start to grow back 1 month after you have completed chemotherapy, but it will take several months to be long enough to go without a wig. Sometimes your new hair can be curlier or straighter – or even a different color. In time, it may go back to how it was before treatment

SKIN AND NAIL CHANGES

Certain drugs can cause changes to your skin. Your skin may become dry. It is best to use mild soaps that are gentle on your skin, and to use lotions and creams to keep your skin moist.

It is also important to protect your skin from the sun. When you are outside, always wear

sunscreen and lip balm. Wear protective clothing such as long sleeve shirts, pants, and a hat with a wide brim. Do not use tanning beds.

Keep your nails clean and cut short. Check with your nurse or doctor before getting a manicure.

Call Your Doctor or Nurse if:

- You develop sudden or severe itching
- Your skin has a rash or hives

NERVE CHANGES

Some treatments can cause nerve problems. You may have numbness, tingling or burning feeling in different parts of your body. It often begins in your hands or feet. This is called “peripheral neuropathy.”

Notify Your Doctor or Nurse if:

- You develop pain, tingling, burning, or weak feeling in your hands or feet, or have pain when you walk
- You have movement problems such as losing your balance, or fall. You have shaking, trembling, or numbness in your hands and feet. You have trouble holding or picking things up
- You have trouble hearing

FATIGUE

Treatment can make you tired. So can other things like anemia, being depressed or in pain, taking certain medicines, or having trouble sleeping.

Try these tips to feel better:

- Do activities that are most important first
- Ask others for help
- Take time off from your job, or work fewer hours
- Eat and drink well
- Be as active as you can
- Take time to rest
- Make a bedtime routine to help you relax

INFECTION

Cancer and its treatments may make it more likely that you will develop an infection. An infection occurs when bacteria, viruses, or less often, fungi (such as yeast) invade the body, but the immune system cannot stop them fast enough. Cancer treatments may weaken the immune system, increasing the chance of an infection. Infection during cancer treatment can be life threatening. Your health care team will help you determine if the infection is serious and how best to manage your symptoms. You may also be prescribed medications to prevent infection.

Symptoms of infection requiring immediate care:

People experiencing these symptoms may need emergency care. Call your health care team right away if you have 1 or more of the signs listed below. If your symptoms cannot be assessed right away, you may need to go to the emergency room.

- Fever that is 100.5° F (38° C) or higher
- Shaking chills
- Chest pain or shortness of breath
- Confusion
- Severe headache with a stiff neck
- Bloody or cloudy urine

Symptoms of infection requiring prompt care:

These symptoms may be safely managed by visiting your doctor's office:

- Cough
- Swelling or redness anywhere, including around a cut, wound, or catheter
- Sores or white coating in your mouth or on your tongue
- Tooth or gum pain
- Sore throat
- Ear pain
- Headache or bad sinus or facial pain
- Stiff or sore neck
- Abdominal pain
- Skin sores or rash
- Diarrhea or sores near the anus
- Bloody or cloudy urine, Pain or burning when urinating
- Vaginal discharge or itching
- Any change or something that does not feel normal for you, including a general sense of feeling unwell

Preventing infections

The following tips can help prevent infections:

- Wash your hands well and often or use antibacterial hand sanitizers. Always clean your hands before eating and after using the restroom.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick or recently ill.
- Avoid big crowds when possible
- Avoid sharing food, drinks, utensils, and personal items
- Shower or bathe daily and apply lotion to prevent dry cracked skin
- Clean teeth and gums with a soft toothbrush
- Avoid cuts and use an electric razor if possible
- Avoid cat litter and handling animal waste
- Keep the area around any catheter(s) clean and dry
- Follow food safety guidelines, including no raw or undercooked meats, fish, shellfish, or poultry and washing all fresh fruits and vegetables
- Eat a variety of nutritious foods
- Get at least 7 to 8 hours of sleep
- Get enough physical activity
- Check with your health care team before getting any shot or vaccine yourself

SIDE EFFECTS OF IMMUNOTHERAPY

Treatment with immunotherapy may cause different side effects than chemotherapy treatment. Immune-related side effects can affect any organ or tissue, but most commonly affect the skin, colon, lungs, liver, and endocrine organs (such as the pituitary gland and thyroid gland).

The most common side effects of immunotherapy include:

- Skin redness, itching and dryness are common reactions to immunotherapy.
- Flu-like symptoms: Fatigue (feeling tired), fever, chills, weakness, nausea (feeling sick to your stomach), vomiting (throwing up), dizziness, body aches, and high or low blood pressure are all possible side effects of immunotherapy.

Other possible side effects that you may experience include:

- Muscle aches
- Shortness of breath (trouble breathing)
- Swelling of legs (edema)
- Sinus congestion
- Headaches
- Weight gain from retaining fluid
- Diarrhea
- Hormone changes, including hypothyroidism, which is when the thyroid gland does not make enough thyroid hormones and can cause fatigue and weight gain
- Cough

It is very important to stay hydrated when experiencing these symptoms. Seek medical attention if you are unable to keep any liquids down, and talk with your doctor about how to manage these side effects. Many side effects will go away on their own, but others can be very serious and require attention right away.

It is important to note that there can be other side effects that are not listed here. Talk with your health care team about what side effects you can expect, who to contact, and what to do if you have unexpected side effects.

SEXUAL AND FERTILITY CHANGES

Talk with your doctor before treatment starts to learn about what sexual changes or changes to your fertility you may have. These changes you may have depend on the kind of chemotherapy you'll be getting and the type of cancer you have. Your age and other health issues are also important.

Potential Sexual Problems in Men:

- Always wear a condom when you have sex because some chemotherapy may be in your semen
- You may feel too tired or stressed to have sex
- You may not be able to have an orgasm
- It may be difficult to keep an erection. This is called "impotence"

Potential Sexual Problems in Women:

- Dryness or itchy feeling in the vagina
- Hot Flashes
- Infections of the vagina or bladder
- Periods that are not regular or no periods
- Stress, fatigue, or little interest in sex
- If you have not gone through menopause, it is important to use birth control. **Do not get pregnant during treatment** because it can harm the fetus

FERTILITY PRESERVATION

Some cancer treatments can cause infertility (inability to have a child) or decrease your fertility. Your risk depends on several factors including age, previous fertility problems, the type of cancer you have, and the type of treatments you will receive.

- Fertility preservation may be an option if done in a timely manner
- Preservation techniques do not worsen your cancer prognosis.
- Fertility preservation can be done quickly and avoid significant delay of treatment
- Talk to your doctor about your choices and discuss the possible need for a fertility specialist referral before starting chemotherapy.

FERTILITY RESOURCES

Southern California Reproductive Center: www.scrxivf.com; 805-658-9112

Fertile HOPE: www.fertilehope.org; 855-220-7777

"Moving Forward" Video Series for Young Adults With Cancer: Fertility: www.cancer.net/movingforward

The Sperm Bank of California: www.thespermbankofca.org

Managing Your Cancer Care During an Emergency

An emergency such as a flood, fire, earthquake, or hurricane is challenging for everyone. Having cancer puts you at an even greater risk because it might be difficult to get treatment or care for yourself and your loved ones.

- 1. Plan ahead.** Make a family emergency plan. Talk to neighbors and exchange phone numbers with them.
- 2. Create an emergency kit.** You need nutritious food, enough water, and a way to contact emergency services if needed. A first-aid kit with hand sanitizer, disinfectant, and antibiotic cream is important. Pack your emergency supplies in a waterproof container, such as a sealed plastic bag or pouch. You can pack some of your food and water in a “go bag” to take if you leave your home. Put a can opener in your kit to open cans of food. This bag should also include medical supplies and your medical information.
- 3. Be ready to make a call or leave home.** Keep your phone charged and ready. Keep fuel or an electric charge in your car so you can easily get to safety if needed. You should also keep a flashlight, emergency radio, and contact information for neighbors and family members on hand.
- 4. Take shelter safely.** You can stay home in some emergencies, but you might not have water, electricity, heat, or air conditioning. Think about shoes and clothing you might need, including boots or shoes and blankets or coats. You need food and clean water for at least 3 days. Enough for 1 to 2 weeks is even better. Also store food, water, and medicines for any pets.
- 5. Carry your medical information.** Keep the following information in a safe place in your pocket, purse, or briefcase at all times: Your doctor’s name and phone number, information on your type and stage of cancer, and the type of cancer treatment you are having.
- 6. Get reliable information.** Check your local news on TV, the radio, or online to find accurate weather reports and emergency information. You can also check the social media pages for your local police, fire or sheriff’s department.
- 7. Find emergency cancer care.** Call your doctor’s office as soon as possible to learn what to do. ASCO and the National Cancer Institute (NCI) have a website with emergency resources for people with cancer in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).
- 8. Be prepared during the COVID-19 pandemic.** Be sure to have on hand the supplies you may need to protect yourself from COVID-19 infection. The safest way to obtain your supplies is to have them delivered. If you must shop in person, avoid busy times of the day, always wear a cloth face covering, and keep a distance of at least 6 feet from other people. Be sure to wash your hands after shopping in public or use hand sanitizer if you don’t have access to soap and water.

Advance Directives

Advance directives are written instructions regarding your medical care preferences. Because unexpected situations can happen at any age, all adults need advance directives. They describe your preferences regarding treatment if you're faced with a serious accident or illness. Your family and doctors will consult your advance directives if you're unable to make your own health care decisions. Having written instructions can help reduce confusion or disagreement. Choosing a person to act as your health care agent is possibly the most important part of your planning. You need to trust that this person has your interests at heart, understands your wishes and will act accordingly.

Advance directives include:

- **Living will.** This written, legal document spells out the types of medical treatments and life-sustaining measures you want and don't want, such as mechanical breathing (ventilation), tube feeding or resuscitation. A living will can't cover every possible situation. Therefore, you might also want a medical POA to designate someone to be your health care agent. Living wills may also be called health care declarations or health care directives.
- **Medical or health care power of attorney (POA).** The medical POA is a legal document that designates an individual — referred to as your health care agent or proxy— to make medical decisions for you in the event that you're unable to do so. This person will be guided by your living will but has the authority to interpret your wishes in situations that aren't described in your living will. A Medical POA is different from a power of attorney authorizing someone to make financial transactions for you.
- **Do not resuscitate (DNR) order.** This is a request to not have cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) if your heart stops or if you stop breathing. Advance directives do not have to include a DNR order, and you don't have to have an advance directive to have a DNR order. Your doctor can put a DNR order in your medical chart.
- **Physicians Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST)** is a form that gives seriously-ill patients more control over their end-of-life care, including medical treatment, extraordinary measures (such as a ventilator or feeding tube) and CPR. Printed on bright pink paper, and signed by both a doctor and patient, POLST can prevent unwanted or ineffective treatments, reduce patient and family suffering, and ensure that a patient's wishes are honored. The POLST complements an Advance Directive and is not intended to replace the document.
<http://capolst.org/>
- **Five Wishes Program** – Lets your family and doctors know: who you want to make health care decisions for you when you can't make them, the kind of medical treatment you want or don't want, how comfortable you want to be, how you want people to treat you, what you want your loved ones to know. <http://www.agingwithdignity.org/>

RESOURCES

NATIONAL:

- National Cancer Institute: www.cancer.gov
- Cancer Care: www.cancercare.org
- People Living With Cancer: www.peoplelivingwithcancer.org
- American Cancer Society: www.cancer.org
- The National Cancer Comprehensive Network: www.nccn.org
- The Wellness Community: www.thewellnesscommunity.org
- Chemo Care: www.chemocare.com
- Susan G. Komen for the Cure: www.komen.org
- Oncology Nursing Society: <http://ons.org/patientEd>
- Leukemia & Lymphoma Society: www.leukemia-lymphoma.org

LOCAL RESOURCES & SUPPORT GROUPS:

- American Cancer Society – Greater Ventura County Unit
2186 Knoll Drive, Suite A
Ventura, CA 93003
(805)644-4248
- Community Memorial Hospital – Cancer Resource Center
2900 Loma Vista Road, Suite 101
Ventura, CA 93003
(805)652-5459
- Leukemia & Lymphoma Society – The Greater Los Angeles Chapter
6033 West Century Blvd. Suite 300
Los Angeles, CA 90045
(310)342-5800
- St. John’s Cancer Center of Ventura County
1700 North Rose Ave
Oxnard, CA. 93030
(805)988-2641

- Susan G. Komen – Los Angeles County Affiliate
1000 East Walnut Ave, Suite 123
Pasadena, CA. 91106
(626)577-2700.
komenlacounty.org

- Cancer Support Network
530 Hampshire Rd.
Westlake Village, CA 91361
(805)379-4777

Local Wig Shops

- Artistic Hairpieces and Wigs
1840 Ventura Blvd
Camarillo, CA
(805) 482-4848
- Debra's Alternative
737 N. A Street
Oxnard, CA
(805) 983-1590
- Kimberly Hairpieces & Wigs
1425 State St.
Santa Barbara, CA
(805)899-8200

Breast Prosthesis and Custom Bras

- Altheas Corset Shop
2320 E. Main
Ventura, CA93003
(805)643-3537

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can I eat prior to treatment?

Yes, you may have a light meal prior to your appointment. We recommend you avoid greasy/fried foods.

2. Will I feel sick during my infusion?

Prior to receiving any nausea causing treatment, you will be “pre-medicated” with anti-nausea medication through an IV. These drugs work quickly so it is unlikely you will have nausea during your infusion.

3. When can I expect to feel sick?

Depending on what drugs you receive you may experience mild to moderate nausea. Nausea usually starts one-two days after treatment and may last for several days. This is referred to as “delayed nausea”. You will be given medication based on what drugs you receive to help you manage delayed nausea.

4. Will I lose my hair?

The amount of hair loss you experience will depend on what drugs you receive. Many chemotherapy drugs cause little or no hair loss, while some will almost always cause total hair loss and usually starts about two weeks after your first infusion. Your nurse will tell you how much if any hair loss you can expect.

5. Can I take my usual medications?

Before you begin treatment, your doctor will review all the medications you are taking and tell you if there are any drugs that you should not take while on treatment. Unless otherwise instructed, you should continue to take your regular medications. It is important to keep your oncologist informed of any medications that you start or stop while on treatment