

VENTURA COUNTY HEMATOLOGY ONCOLOGY SPECIALISTS



GUIDE FOR PATIENTS ON INTRAVENOUS CANCER TREATMENT

1700 N ROSE AVENUE
SUITE 320
OXNARD, CA 93030
P (805) 485-8709
F (805) 485-5521

2900 LOMA VISTA ROAD
SUITE 200
VENTURA, CA 93003
P (805) 643-4283
F (805) 643-0604

500 PASEO CAMARILLO
SUITE 106
CAMARILLO, CA 93010
P (805) 383-1567
F (805) 383-1569

www.venturaoncology.com

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How to Reach Us When You Have Questions or Concerns

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

If you have a medical emergency that requires immediate assistance, please call 911. If you need to speak with a nurse or physician during office hours, please call (805) 485-8709. The nurses' station extension is 136. 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 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. 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 Urgent Medical Issues After Office Hours:

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

For Questions Regarding Appointment Scheduling:

Appointment with	Contact Name	(805) 485-8709, Extension
Dr. Lynn Kong	Gracie A	220
Dr. Kevin Chang	Keri R	252
Dr. Chirag Dalsania	Lisa G	273
Dr. Todd Yates	Lea C	253
Dr. Fred Mortazavi	Xochitl G	283
Katie or Emily – Physician Assistants	Patty	222
Dignity Health Infusion Center - Oxnard	Ashley	113
Dignity Health Infusion Center - Ventura	Marisol	215
Dignity Health Infusion Center - Camarillo	Andi	128

What You Should Know Before Your IV Treatment

Cancer treatment uses drugs such as chemotherapy, immunotherapy, targeted therapy or hormone therapy to:

- Destroy cancer cells
- Stop cancer cells from spreading
- Slow the growth of cancer cells

Cancer treatment drugs can be given alone, with other drugs or modes of treatment. It can help other treatments work better. For example, you may get cancer drug therapy before or after surgery or radiation therapy. Today, there are many different kinds of infusion cancer treatment. They can be given in these forms:

- 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

Treatment Scheduling

You may get IV 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

At the time of your first treatment, your nurse will review the drugs ordered by your doctor, and discuss common side effects. It is recommended that you bring any prescriptions given to you by your oncologist and a current list of your medications.

Infusion centers are equipped with reclining chairs. You are welcome to bring reading materials and/or small electronic portable devices. As a courtesy to other clients, 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. One or two family members are welcome to accompany you during your first infusion.

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

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.
- Before taking any anti-diarrheal medicine, please call your doctor or nurse. Your instructions may be different than the directions on the box of over the counter medicines.
- Clean your rectal area with warm water and a baby wipe. Keep the area dry. Ask about creams that can help.

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
- Raw fruits or vegetables. Most canned fruits and vegetables are okay
- 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 everyday. 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 everyday. Walk or ride an exercise bike for 15 to 30 minutes a day
- If you are still having constipation, discuss 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

can cause changes in taste or smell, dry mouth, 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

Cancer drug therapy may lead to low blood counts, causing the possibility of a variety of symptoms. These symptoms depend on the type of low blood cell count. 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 everyday.

Your doctor or nurse will order blood tests. If you have anemia, you may need medicine or a blood transfusion to help you feel better.

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

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

Protect Yourself:

- 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

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

Cancer medications 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 cancer drugs 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

Cancer 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

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 you doctor about your choices and discuss the possible need for a fertility specialist referral before starting chemotherapy.

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

Advance Directives

Advance directives are written instructions regarding your medical care preferences. 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.

Living wills and other advance directives describe your preferences regarding end-of-life care. 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. These legal documents speak for you when you're not able to speak for yourself.

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. He or she should also be mature and levelheaded, and comfortable with candid conversations. Don't pick someone out of feelings of guilt or obligation. Your health care agent doesn't necessarily have to be a family member. You may want your health care decision maker to be different from the person you choose to handle your financial matters. It may be helpful, but it's not necessary, if the person lives in the same city or state as you do.

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. In some states, living wills may 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 also might be a good idea if your family is opposed to some of your wishes or is divided about them. **NOTE:** it 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. To learn more about POLST and to obtain the form, please go to <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

ON-LINE RESOURCES

- 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@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, CA 93003
(805)643-3537

Financial Assistance Programs

- Patient Financial Advocate Annette finds available assistance programs provided by manufacturers and foundations to help our patients afford their expensive out of pockets costs.
1-805 485-8709 extension 140
- Patient Services Incorporated (PSI) is a national non-profit organization that specializes in health care insurance premium, co-payment and waiver assistance for people with chronic medical illnesses.
1-800-366-7741
- The Patient Advocate Foundation is a national non-profit organization that serves as liaison between the patient and insurer, employer and/or creditors to resolve insurance, job retention and debt crisis matters in relation to their diagnosis.
1-800-532-5274
- Patient Advocate Foundation Co-Pay Relief (PAF CPR) assists insured patients diagnosed with head & neck, breast, colon, lung, lymphoma, prostate, kidney and pancreatic cancer, sarcoma, secondary issues associated with cancer treatment, autoimmune, macular degeneration and diabetes in meeting their co-payments.
1-866-512-3861
- The Patient Access Network Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving access to needed health services for insured patients who cannot afford the out-of-pocket costs associated with their treatment.
1-866-316-7263
- The Healthwell Foundation is a non-profit charitable organization that helps individuals with prescription drug co-insurance, deductibles, health insurance premiums and certain out-of-pocket health care costs.
1-800-675-8416
- The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society Patient Financial Aid provide financial assistance to patients with leukemia, myeloma, hodgkins and non-hodgkins lymphoma of up to \$500 per year for treatment, transportation and procedures through your local chapter. Greater Los Angeles Chapter
1-310-216-7600

Medication Assistance Programs

- www.rxhelpforca.org – A program for eligible California residents to obtain free or discounted prescription drugs.
- www.needymeds.com – Provides a list of medications available at a discount. Provides manufacturer contact information.
- www.the.medicinoprogram.com – Provides patient assistance with the enrollment process in drug assistance programs.
- www.pparx.org – The Partnership for Prescription Assistance helps qualified patients who lack prescription coverage find private or public programs that can help them obtain the medicines they need.
- www.rxassist.org – Provides access to pharmaceutical companies' patient assistance programs.
- www.medicare.gov – Information on public and private programs for discounted medications.
- www.phrma.org – Directory of Prescription Drug Assistance Programs.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can I eat prior to chemo?

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 chemotherapy you will be “pre-medicated” with anti-nausea medication through an IV. These drugs work quickly so it is unlikely you will have chemo induced 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 chemo 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 chemotherapy your doctor will review all the medications you are taking and tell you if there are any drugs that are contra-indicated while on chemo. 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 chemo.