

A large, flowing pink ribbon graphic that starts at the top left, loops around, and extends towards the right side of the page. It has a slight gradient and a soft shadow.

fact sheet #1

How to Prepare For Chemo Day

A smaller, flowing pink ribbon graphic that starts from the right side and curves downwards and to the left, ending near the bottom left corner. It has a slight gradient and a soft shadow.

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Before going in for chemo, here are my top 15 items:

The day before:

1. Meds. Have your prescriptions filled the day before so you have them with you before your chemo starts. Take your pre-appointment medications the night before e.g. anti-anxiety.
2. Double check your appointment time, traffic/parking plan and who is going with you to your appointment. Often you will need to brief your chemo-buddy to prepare them for what to expect on the chemo day.
3. Medical notebook. Ensure you have your medical notebook and list any issues and questions you have for your medical team.
4. Blood test. If you need to have a blood test, ensure you have it and take your serial blood test card.
5. Support. Talk to a friend and talk to your Nurse, Doctor or Oncologist if you have any concerns (don't leave them until chemo day).
6. Plan what you will wear during chemo. Choose something that makes you feel good and wear layers so you can easily adjust things when you get hot and cold.
7. Relax and enjoy the evening before chemo. Talk to a friend, watch some television or a movie, have a bath and a great sleep.
8. Pack a carry bag with the following:
 - a. Food. Prepare a bag of healthy snacks that you like and are able to eat e.g. yogurt, nuts, a muffin, a sandwich and some chocolate. Include some paper napkins or Kleenex.
 - b. Drinks. Prepare a drink bottle filled with a beverage you like and can tolerate.
 - c. Light reading. Grab some feel good and absorbing light reading e.g. a couple of magazines, newspaper or a novel.
 - d. Art supplies. Doing sketching or other art activities is a really peaceful focus for the mind during chemo. Pack a Sketch pad and some water colour pencils (and a brush).
 - e. Puzzles. Sudoku, jigsaws and crosswords help the day go faster and are relaxing for the mind.
 - f. Headphones and relaxation CDs or relaxing music are must haves. I like having headphones on so I can block out all the other medical stuff happening around me.
 - g. Movies. Take a DVD and portable player if you would like to watch a movie.

And on the chemo day:

1. Have a chemo buddy. Take a friend or family member to tell you jokes, hold your hand, fetch cups of tea and just be there for you.
2. Hot drinks. Drink two hot drinks before arriving for your appointment and keep your hydration levels up during the day. This helps with finding a vein but also helps your body stay hydrated during chemo.
3. Exercise. If you can, exercise a little before you get to the hospital, even if it is a five minute walk. This will help with your circulation, help with your veins and make you feel better.
4. Stay warm. Have a 'hot' shower and dress up warmly with a jacket, scarf, gloves and keep your hands warm (even in your pockets). Keeping as warm as possible will help prepare your veins.
5. Positivity. I tell people that I have the rule, "no negative stories on chemo days". People often want to tell you about someone they know going through cancer or something terrible that just happened. I need to be surrounded and protected in a bubble of healing and positivity.
6. Meditate and visualise. Visualise that the chemo is doing wonderful things to your cancer cells, breathe deeply and visualise yourself relaxing on a beautiful beach or your favourite place. It does make you relax and feel a bit better.
7. Communicate. If you are not feeling well or something is on your mind, tell your friend or the Nurse. Speak out and let yourself be supported.

