

# Your Infusion Therapy Visit Guide

Welcome to the Sachs Family  
Foundation Infusion Suite



AT THE FOREFRONT

**UChicago  
Medicine**

**The Sachs Family Foundation Infusion Suite is in  
the Duchossois Center for Advanced Medicine  
(DCAM) 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Area 6H.**

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**Do not wait until your visit to bring up urgent concerns.**

**If you are very sick call your doctor  
or go to the closest Emergency Room**

# Infusion Therapy for Cancer

During your visits to the Sachs Family Foundation Infusion Suite, you may have Chemotherapy, Immunotherapy or Biotherapy.

## Chemotherapy (Chemo)

Chemotherapy is the use of strong drugs to treat cancer. These drugs are often called anticancer drugs or chemo (KEY-mo).

### **Chemotherapy can cure some kinds of cancer.**

- Sometimes it is used to slow the growth of cancer or to keep cancer from going to other parts of the body.
- Chemotherapy can also lessen the symptoms of cancer, helping some patients with a better quality of life.
- When cancer has been removed by surgery, chemotherapy may be used to keep the cancer from coming back, called adjuvant therapy.

## Immunotherapy

Immunotherapy is treatment that uses some parts of a person's immune system to fight diseases such as cancer. This can be done in a couple of ways:

- Stimulating your own immune system to work harder or smarter to attack cancer cells
- Giving you man-made immune system parts, such as man-made proteins

In the last 20 to 30 years immunotherapy has become an important part of treating some kinds of cancer. Newer kinds of immunotherapies are now being studied, and they will impact how we treat cancer in the future.

Immunotherapy includes treatments that work in different ways. Some boost the body's immune system in a very general way. Others help train the immune system to attack specific cancer cells.

Immunotherapy works better for some kinds of cancer. It is used by itself for some cancers, but for others it seems to work better when used with other kinds of treatment.

# Infusion Therapy for Cancer

## Biotherapy is a kind of Immunotherapy

Biotherapy is a disease treatment made from living organisms found naturally in the body or made in a lab. Biotherapy is also called *biological therapy* or *biological response modifier therapy*. Biotherapy can be used to:

- Speed up or slow the immune system to help the body fight cancer, infection, and other diseases.
- Attack specific cancer cells, and may keep them from growing or kill them.
- Lessen some side effects caused by some cancer treatments.

Biotherapy may include gene therapy, and some targeted therapies. Biotherapy can also include immunotherapy such as vaccines, cytokines, and some antibodies.

The goal of immunotherapy is to stimulate your own immune system to work harder or smarter to attack cancer cells. This is done by giving you man-made immune system parts such as man-made proteins.

## How Cancer Treatment is Given

Most anticancer drugs are systemic treatment, meaning they get into the blood stream and go to nearly every part of the body.

- Most anticancer drugs are given into a vein (IV) using a small tube or catheter. You may have an IV inserted when you arrive for your treatment or it may be given through a central line that stays in place for a longer period of time. Talk to your healthcare team about your options.
- Some anticancer drugs are given by injection into muscle (a shot or IM).
- Some anticancer drugs are pills or a liquid and are taken orally (by mouth).
- Anticancer drugs can also be given in a cream that is placed on the skin.

**Chemotherapy is often given in cycles.** You will receive a treatment and then go home to allow your body to react. This is called a recovery period. Most patients have more than one treatment.

# Infusion Therapy for Cancer

## Side Effects

**Every person reacts differently to the treatment.** It is normal to be worried about the possible side effects of chemotherapy. These feelings can be overwhelming before chemotherapy begins. It is important to talk about your concerns with your care team.

Not all patients have side effects and many people have few or no side effects from their treatment.

**Your doctor will order medications to help manage side effects of treatments.** You will get some medications with treatment and a prescription for medications to take at home. Take your medications as directed by your doctor. Always tell your healthcare team if you have any side effects.

Any side effect you may have also depends on the kind of treatment you are getting. Side effects for most chemotherapy, immunotherapy or biotherapy infusion treatments can include feeling tired, change in blood counts, having the feeling like you want to throw up or hair loss.

## Using a Port-A-Cath

A port is a medical device put under your skin by surgery. A port can be used for taking blood and IV access. If you have a port, we can take your blood and give you medication from the same place each time.

- If you have a port you can still have your blood drawn from your arm.
- A port can also be used in radiology for contrast fluids for CT scans.
- Patients with a port should wear loose fitting shirts with buttons for easy access.

### **A port may be recommended if:**

- You get medication that may cause tissue damage if it leaks from an IV site.
- You have “bad veins” (or hard to stick) and have had difficulty with IV lines and drawing blood in the past.
- You had a surgical procedure that limits you to having blood taken from only one arm (such as lumpectomy, mastectomy, or lymph node removal)
- You go home with a continuous portable chemotherapy pump.

**There are risks with having a port.** Risks can include blood clots, infection and scarring. Your nurse and doctor will work with you to decide if the benefits are more than the possible risks.

# Infusion Therapy for Cancer

## Importance of Blood Tests

For some of your treatments, your care team must check specific things in your blood. The blood test results will help us know what medication to give you and how much to give. Test results must be known before your medication can be prepared.

Some things to know and remember.

- Lab tests can be done no more than 24 hours before your treatment, unless otherwise directed by your healthcare team.
- Blood samples are often taken on the day of your treatment. It can take up to 2 hours for the results from the blood test to come back from the lab.
- Some tests must be sent out and can take 2 days or more.
- To lower your wait time, ask your nurse if you can have your bloodwork tested a day before your appointment.
- Sometimes your blood must be tested at the University of Chicago Medicine.
- Other times, you may be able to have your blood tested at a lab near you.
- Talk with your oncologist or oncology nurse if you want blood tests done at another lab.

Your care team will let you know when your blood needs to be taken. If your blood work is done at University of Chicago Medicine, our phlebotomists, nurses or research phlebotomists will draw your blood.

**You can get a copy of your lab results at MyChart:**

<https://mychart.uchospitals.edu/mychart/>

## Getting Ready for Your Visit

**Plan to arrive 30 minutes before your appointment. This will help make sure you get here on time if taking public transportation and time to park if you are driving.**

### When to Arrive

You may be asked to arrive up to 2 hours before your infusion therapy appointment if you need blood tests and they have not been done already.

### Your First Visit May Be Longer

The first visit is most likely your longest appointment. It is best to plan to spend most of the day at the infusion center. During this appointment your nurse will also go over infusion education with you.

You will have your blood taken for lab tests when you come for your first treatment. Your medication will be prepared after your lab work has been reviewed.

Medication infusion times and the kind and the amount of medication given are different for each patient and depends on the plan of care from your doctor. If your treatment is chemotherapy, there are often extra medications given to manage side effects.

The amount of time it takes to prepare and complete your infusion can be different from treatment to treatment. Treatments can take from 1 to 8 hours. The staff can give you some idea of how long it may take. Keep in mind there are many unexpected things that can take more time.

### Food

Many patients worry about eating before their treatment. Please eat according to your normal schedule. You may find it best to eat a light meal and not eat fried, spicy, or acidic foods before your treatment. Do not skip meals before your treatment unless told to you by your doctor.

The University of Chicago Medicine has many different food courts. There is no food provided in the Infusion Therapy Suite. Eat a good meal on the day of your appointment and bring your own food or snacks to eat during your treatment.

# Getting Ready for Your First Visit

## Visitors

Each patient is allowed 1 to 2 visitors. If this is your first time for treatment, we recommend you have someone with you.

For the safety and comfort of all patients, children under the age of 12 and pets are not allowed in our infusion treatment area.

## Do Not Wear any Fragrance or Perfume

Do not wear anything with heavy scents. Other patients may be sensitive to smells.

## Clothing

Wear comfortable loose fitting clothes.

The temperature can change in different parts of the building so bring layers to stay comfortable. If you have a port, wear a button down shirt so the nurse can easily access the area of your port.

Wear comfortable shoes with rubber soles to avoid slips and falls.



## Bring the Following to Every Visit

- Valid Driver's License or Photo ID.
- Insurance Card and any authorization or referral forms we may not have.
- At your first visit you will be given a binder to keep all of your materials organized. Bring your binder with you every time.
- Your medications including all over the counter, home remedies, herbal medications, vitamins, weight gain products and weight loss products. We want to know when you take the medication and how much you take. Bring any pain medication you may need to take during the time you are here.
- Snacks and meals for the time you are here.

## Other Things to Think About

- Make plans for any needed child care. Children under age 18 must be with an adult who is not the patient. Children under the age of 12 are not allowed in our infusion treatment area.

# Getting Ready for Your First Visit

## Transportation and Driving

We recommend you have someone to take you to and from your first chemotherapy treatment. After that, driving yourself depends on the medications you get, your response to them, and your total health. The effects of some medications may make it unsafe for you to drive.



If you have a ride home, but the driver is not staying with you during treatment, it is best that they are flexible about the time of pick-up. We will be happy to call your driver 30 minutes before you are finished with your treatment.

Talk about any transportation issues you may have with your oncology team before your first infusion. On the day of treatment, let the infusion nurse know of any transportation problems before your treatment starts.

## Medications Before Your Treatment

Some treatments require you to take medications before you have the treatment. These pre-medications help manage or lessen the risks for reactions during treatment, like allergic reactions or nausea (feeling like you want to throw up).



The infusion nurse will go over all the orders from your oncologist and let you know if you need any pre-medications.

- The nurse in the clinic will tell you if you need to take pre-medications before coming to infusion. Some treatments require you to take pre-medications at home the day or morning before treatment.
- Before treatment is started, tell your nurse if you did not take your pre-medications.
- Pre-medications may be given by mouth or may need to be given by IV.
- Some pre-medications may be given 30 to 60 minutes before treatment. If given by mouth, the infusion nurse may give you these before starting an intravenous line. If given with IV, they may use a syringe or an IV bag.



# Getting Ready for Your First Visit

## Your Regular Medications and Your Pain Medications

- Take all your scheduled medications unless told differently by your doctor.
- Pain medications are not normally a part of pre-medications. If you take pain medications for pain management, you should bring your own oral pain medication.
- If you need refills for your home medications, the nurses in the doctor's clinic can help you with that.

## Drink Plenty of Water

It is important you are well hydrated during the procedure.

If you have a health condition that keeps you from drinking large amounts of water, follow-up with your doctor for how to hydrate before your infusion procedure.

Please bring your own water bottle.

Filtered water is available.



## Useful Things to Know

- See your dentist for an exam and cleaning before chemo. Check with your doctor before any invasive procedures are scheduled.
- If you are thinking of getting a wig, go shopping while you have your hair so they can match color and style.
- You can find more information about our oncology services, support resources and our care team in the Services, Resources and Care Team guide in your cancer care book.

## Questions

The nursing staff will check how you are doing before treatment, during treatment and before you go home. The staff will make every effort to keep you comfortable, meet your needs during treatment and answer any questions you have.

**Do not wait until your visit to bring up urgent concerns. If you are very sick call your doctor or go to the closest Emergency Room.**

# Your Visit Overview

Some appointments will take more time than others. The total time for your visit may take 2 ½ hours up to a full day if your appointment includes blood tests, time with your doctor or advance practice registered nurse, treatment and after treatment monitoring.

<b>Step 1</b>	<b>Check-in.</b> You arrive and check in.
<b>Step 2</b>	<b>Vital Signs and Blood Samples.</b> A medical assistant will check your vital signs at each visit. If needed, a phlebotomist or nurse will take blood samples from you and send it to the lab for testing. It may take the lab <b>up to 2 hours</b> to test your blood.
<b>Step 3</b>	<b>Assessment.</b> You may see a doctor, physician assistant or advance practice registered nurse. This will be <b>1 to 2 hours</b> after your blood sample was taken.
<b>Step 4</b>	<b>Care Team Consultation.</b> Based on your lab test results and how you are feeling, your doctor or nurse: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May give the okay for your treatment, <b>or</b></li> <li>• May need to reschedule your treatment for another day.</li> </ul>
<b>Step 5</b>	
<p><b>Step 5 if we are not able</b> to give your treatment on this day:</p> <p><b>A.</b> You will be rescheduled based on the recommendation from your doctor or nurse.</p> <p><b>B.</b> You will then be sent home.</p>	<p><b>Step 5 if we are able</b> to give your treatment on this day:</p> <p><b>A.</b> As the pharmacy is getting your medications ready, you will go to the treatment bay.</p> <p><b>B.</b> Your nurse will do an assessment and give you any pre-medications if needed. At this time, tell your nurse how you plan to get home.</p> <p><b>C.</b> You will have your infusion treatment.</p> <p><b>D.</b> If needed you will also have after-treatment monitoring, to watch you closely for any problems.</p> <p><b>E.</b> Depending on the treatment, you will be in the treatment bay for <b>30 minutes to 8 hours</b>.</p> <p><b>F.</b> After your treatment and any after-treatment monitoring you will be ready to go home.</p>

# Your Infusion Therapy Visit

All visits will begin with Patient Check in and taking your vital signs. Each visit can be different, but will often include the following.

## Step 1. Patient Check-in and Waiting

**DCAM 6<sup>th</sup> Floor:** When you get to the 6<sup>th</sup> floor, our clinics are in 6H. Check in with the Patient Services Representative (PSR). They will let clinic staff know you are here. The patient Services Representative is the receptionist who checks you in.

**Let the staff know if this is your first appointment in the Outpatient Infusion Center.**

## Step 2. Taking Your Vital Signs and Blood Samples

**Vital Signs:** The clinical staff will measure your height, weight and vital signs such as your temperature, blood pressure, pulse, respirations, and oxygen saturation (the oxygen level in your blood).

Your weight is important because it is used to determine the amount of your chemo dose and other medications. We will measure your weight at every visit.

Remove any outer layers of clothing. You do not need to remove your shoes. If you are weighed with shoes on, we will always weigh you with your shoes on and you will need to wear the same shoes each time.

**Blood Tests:** You may need to have your blood drawn if your doctor wants blood results before your treatment.

- At the time your blood is taken an intravenous line (IV) may be put in place for your treatment.
- Let your oncology nurse or oncologist know as soon as possible if another doctor wants other blood tests done. The tests must be ordered before you go to have your blood drawn.
- If you know you need to give a urine sample, ask for a urine sample cup when you check in.
- After blood is taken you may go back to the lobby or sit in the treatment chair.

# Your Infusion Therapy Visit

## Step 3. Assessment

After you are given a chair or bed in the infusion area, you will meet your infusion registered nurse who will be caring for you. The nurse will complete a focused assessment.

Tell the nurse if there is any change in your condition since your last visit

You will be asked many questions about your overall well-being, to know how you are tolerating your treatment, how you are feeling and to address any concerns you may have. The nurse will ask you these questions every time you come in for treatment.

We will also ask about any allergies you may have and any medications you take, including vitamins, supplements and herbs.

This information will be entered into our electronic medical record. This is done to see if there are any changes since your last treatment.



## Step 4. Care Team Consultation

Your care team will review the results of your lab tests and nurse assessment. Your doctor will be contacted if your lab test results do not meet the guidelines for treatment or if your nurse has concerns about your clinical condition. This can mean a delay in your treatment.

Once you are approved from treatment, our infusion therapy pharmacist will prepare your medicine.

Keep in mind that some chemo drugs take longer to prepare than others.

# Your Infusion Therapy Visit

## Step 5. Treatments

### Talking with Your Nurse

Your nurse will explain the infusion therapy process, talk with you about treatment medications and any possible side effects, and answer any questions you may have.

Make sure you tell your nurse of any changes in how you feel during the infusion.

### Receiving Your Infusion Therapy Treatment

Our infusion therapy pharmacist will prepare your medicine after your care team has looked over your lab test results and medical history.

Keep in mind that some chemo drugs take longer to prepare than others. If your treatment is chemotherapy, there are often extra medications given to manage side effects.

Before giving you treatment we will make sure that the medication you are getting is correct. This final check is done by two chemo nurses. They will ask for your name and birthdate and will check your Medical Record Number on your ID wristband. The nurses will also check that you will get the right medication and the right amount. This double-check system is done for your safety.

After this final check is done the infusion nurse will give you your treatment. Your IV for treatment is different than the saline “flush bag” that will be running when the infusion nurse starts the treatment IV. The “flush bag” is used to keep your IV ready for chemotherapy and biotherapy.

Each treatment takes one hour or more. You will be sitting in a comfortable chair and can lie back, go to sleep, read or watch TV. There is a TV at every chair or bed and outlets for charging electronics.

# Your Infusion Therapy Visit

## Step 6. Check-out and Next Steps

### Check out

Your nurse will provide your After Visit Summary (AVS) and information on using **MyChart**.

### Filling Your Prescriptions

You can fill your prescriptions in the DCAM Outpatient Pharmacy on the first floor, or at your own pharmacy. Sometimes prescriptions can be sent electronically or called in to your pharmacy. Make sure you have the correct name and phone number of your pharmacy. Some refills, such as narcotics or pain medications, need a written prescription for legal reasons.

Your insurance company may offer lower costs for your outpatient prescriptions at some pharmacies. Check your prescription benefits for a list of these pharmacies.

### My Chart

MyChart is a patient portal to connect with your doctor from a convenient, safe and secure online service. You can access MyChart at:

<https://mychart.uchospitals.edu/mychart/>



The average amount of time to respond to a message sent through MyChart can take 2 to 3 business days. Business days are Monday to Friday. Business days do not include public holidays or weekends.

**MyChart is NOT for a Medical Emergency.  
If You Have a Medical Emergency Call 911.**

### With MyChart You Can

- Get access to your Electronic Health Record.
- See your medications, allergies, health issues and details of recent visits.
- Connect to Medline Plus to learn more about any medical conditions, illness or medications.
- Ask your providers for medical advice and medication refills.
- Ask for an appointment to see your provider.

**For help with MyChart call UChicago Medicine at 1-(844)442-4278.**