

TH

Chemotherapy Teaching

Topics to Discuss

- Chemotherapy Regimen
- Side Effects & Management
- Breast Cancer Team
- Frequently Asked Questions
- When to Call
- Important Phone Numbers



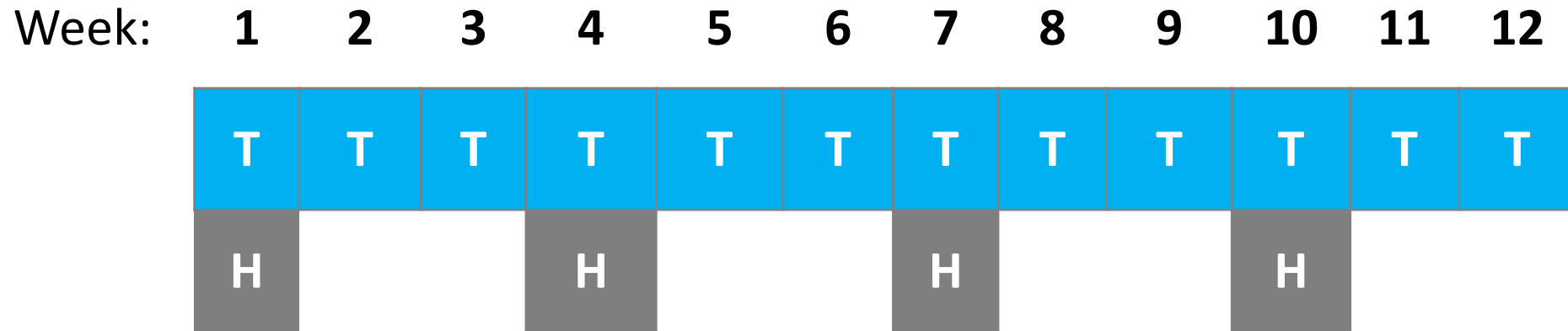
Chemotherapy Regimen

- You are going to start on a chemotherapy treatment plan called TH. TH refers to a combination of medications given in a special order to treat your cancer.
 - Paclitaxel (Taxol)
 - Trastuzumab (Herceptin)



Chemotherapy Regimen

- TH course runs 12 weeks, H to continue for 1 year



T is given IV once a week
H is given IV once every 3 weeks (or a smaller dose given weekly)



Side Effects of TH

Common

- Hair loss/thinning, fatigue, low blood counts, muscle/joint aches, numbness/tingling (hands/feet), reflux, heartburn, mouth sores, nausea, nail changes

Less Common

- Diarrhea, constipation, vomiting, fever, infection, mild infusion reaction

Rare

- Liver enzyme changes, effects on heart function, severe allergic reactions



Rare Side Effects of H

H may affect how well your heart can function. A heart test (echo) will be done as needed.



Managing Side Effects: Infection

Important steps to prevent infection:

- Practice hand hygiene: wash hands frequently especially before eating, after using the bathroom and after contact with high touch surfaces under warm water with soap, towel dry
- Wipe down high touch with moist cleaning wipes
- Stay away from large crowds and gatherings
- Do not go near anyone who is sick
- Do not clean up animal droppings, animal cages, and tanks



Managing Side Effects: Preventing Allergic Reactions

In clinic medications

Your infusion nurse will give you these medications 30-60 minutes before your infusion starts.

- DECADRON (dexamethasone)
- PEPCID (famotidine)
- BENADRYL (diphenhydramine)



Managing Side Effects: Nausea and Vomiting

As needed prescriptions

- COMPAZINE (Prochlorperazine)
 - 1 tablet (10mg) every 6 hours ***as needed*** for nausea
- ZOFRAN (Ondansetron)
 - 1 tablet (8mg) every 8 hours ***as needed*** for nausea



Managing Side Effects: Reflux and Heartburn

Over-the-Counter Medications:

- TUMS (Calcium Carbonate)
 - 1 to 4 tablets (500-2000mg) **as needed** when reflux/heartburn symptoms occur
- PEPCID (Famotidine)
 - 1 to 2 tablets (10-20mg) twice daily **as needed** for reflux/heartburn
- PRILOSEC OTC (Omeprazole)
 - 1 tablet (20mg) once daily for 14 days



Managing Side Effects: Diarrhea

Over-the-Counter Medications:

IMODIUM (Loperamide)

- 2 tablets (4mg) with first loose stool, then 1 tablet (2mg) with each stool thereafter for diarrhea. Do not take more than 8 tablets in a day.



Managing Side Effects: Peripheral Neuropathy

- Peripheral Neuropathy is numbness, tingling, loss of sensation, or weakness in your hands or feet.
- There is no one way to prevent chemotherapy-induced peripheral neuropathy.
- Tell your treatment team if you are experiencing these symptoms. We can prescribe medicine to help you.

To help:

- Protect your hands and feet from extreme heat or cold.
- Wear comfortable non-slip shoes.
- Don't wear clothing or shoes that are too tight.



Supportive Care Resources

- Yoga
- Acupuncture / Acupressure
- Massage
- Support groups
- Survivorship programs
- Workshops
- Music therapy

To learn more about all our Supportive Care offerings log onto: [massgeneral.org/cancer/supportive-care](https://www.massgeneral.org/cancer/supportive-care)



Your Breast Cancer Team

- Oncologist
- Nurse Practitioner
- Pharmacist
- Oncology Social Worker
- Practice Nurse
- Infusion Nurse



Frequently Asked Questions

- **Q: What will my day look like?**
 - Lab Appointment (~15 mins)
 - Provider Appointment (~30 mins)
 - Pre-medications/Hydration (~30 mins)
 - Infusion (~1.5-4 hours)
 - Times will vary for each patient, but your doctor can help provide an estimate during your first appointment.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: **Who do I call for cold caps?**

- You may be eligible for cold caps, a device to reduce hair loss. Please talk to your care team for more information.

Q: **Can I exercise?**

- Yes, exercise is generally safe for cancer patients. Your ability to exercise may depend on the type of cancer and treatments being used. Please talk to your care team to discuss which exercises are appropriate for you.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Should I take my nausea medications when I'm not nauseous?

- If you are not nauseous, you do not need to take your *as needed* medications

Q: Can I take herbal supplements and vitamins?

- Many herbal supplements may interact with medications. Please let your team know if you are currently or are planning to take any herbal products.



Frequently Asked Questions: What Can I Eat?

If you feel well:

Aim to eat a variety of foods high in nutrients including plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and protein every 3-4 hours. These foods help your body rebuild tissues and keep your immune system strong. Stay well hydrated. Most people need between 2-3 liters, or 66-99oz per day, non-caffeinated fluids.

High protein food examples:

Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, seafood, lentils, beans, nuts, seeds, & unsweetened yogurts.



Frequently Asked Questions: What Can I Eat?

The day of chemo:

- 1) Come in well hydrated.
- 2) Eat a light meal:
 - Yogurt + fruit
 - Nut butter or an egg + toast
 - Oatmeal + nuts, fruit

If you are experiencing side effects including nausea, diarrhea/constipation, taste changes, mouth sores:

- See [massgeneral.org/cancer/nutrition](https://www.massgeneral.org/cancer/nutrition) for tips and recipes.
- Ask your care team to refer you to our Registered Dietitians.



When to call?

If experiencing:

- Fever of 100.4F (38C) or higher
- Chills
- Bleeding/unusual bruising
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Dizziness
- Problems with urination
- Uncontrolled nausea, vomiting
- Uncontrolled diarrhea
- Flu-like symptoms
- Extreme fatigue or weakness
- Cough or shortness of breath
- Confusion or agitation
- Rapid heartbeat
- New swelling in arms/legs, face
- Uncontrolled pain or new pain
- COVID-19 or other infectious disease exposures



Contact Information

- For urgent matters, please call. For all other non-urgent matters, please use the patient portal
- Phone Numbers
 - Boston: 617-726-6500
 - Waltham: 781-487-6100
 - Danvers: 978-882-6060
- Patient Portal:
 - patientgateway.org





Mass General Brigham