

We know that facing chemotherapy can feel daunting, so we've put together a checklist of things to help you prepare. See our separate checklist **What to Take to Chemotherapy** for a list of things to take with you on the day.

The information and content provided here is intended for information and educational purposes only. It is not an exhaustive list of points to think about at this stage of your treatment and it is not intended to substitute for professional medical advice. Please speak to your medical team about any queries in relation to your personal situation.



HELPING YOU THROUGH & BEYOND BREAST CANCER

PREPARING FOR CHEMOTHERAPY



NOBODY SHOULD FACE BREAST CANCER ALONE

Future Dreams Breast Cancer Charity provides practical and emotional support for those diagnosed with breast cancer, promotes breast health awareness and funds vital secondary breast cancer research.

At Future Dreams House you will discover an open, inclusive and safe space where you can be yourself, access the practical support you need and benefit from peer support from the point of diagnosis, throughout your treatment and beyond.

For details on all our in-person and virtual services please go to futuredreams.org.uk

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Registered charity number in England and Wales: 1123526



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**BREAST
CANCER**

PREPARING FOR CHEMOTHERAPY

THINGS TO ORGANISE AT HOME

- Do a big grocery shop before each chemo appointment so that you don't need to go shopping for a little while after chemo.
- Make a dentist appointment and optician appointment for before chemo starts as some chemo drugs can cause side effects to your teeth and eyes.
- Request that your local chemist delivers your prescription medication to you at home.
- Sort out your freezer to make room for frozen meals and then make some meals to freeze.
- Apply for your free prescription certificate.
- Plan childcare and school run assistance for chemo days and a few days after each chemo appointment.
- Organise a "Family Command Centre" at home so that everyone can see what everyone is doing, where everyone needs to be and when.
- Save important hospital contact numbers in your phone and keep a written note of them somewhere around the house.
- Plan how you will remember which medication to take when. There are phone Apps that can help with this, or you can set alarms on your phone.
- Have a notebook and pen (or one of the cancer phone Apps) to record your daily side effects in order to report back to your oncologist and/or chemo nurses.
- Make plans for the possibility of losing your hair. Will you have your head shaved and if so, will you do it yourself or go to a hairdresser? Get some soft caps or scarves. Ask your Breast Care Nurse for a wig referral (some NHS hospitals provide wigs for free, others will give a certain amount towards one).
- Make some frozen fruit juice ice lollies and freeze some fresh pineapple which can all help with mouth sores and unpleasant tastes in the mouth.

- Make sure you have your chemo card (given to you by the hospital to inform anyone that you are undergoing chemo) on you at all times when you leave the house.
- Organise someone to take you and bring you home from your chemo appointments.
- Organise COVID and flu jabs for family members and possibly yourself (check with your oncologist).
- Pack your chemo bag (see our separate checklist of what to pack).
- Pack an emergency hospital bag so that you have everything ready if you need to rush to A&E with any of the more serious side effects, or if you have to go in overnight between cycles. Pack nightwear, a wash bag, a book or something to do while waiting, a set of clean underwear and clothes, antibacterial hand gel, antibacterial wipes and a phone charger.

THINGS TO GATHER TOGETHER FOR RECOVERY DAYS

- Warm socks or slippers
- Water bottle
- Notebook and pen
- iPad/tablet/laptop with downloaded films and earphones
- Warm scarf/shawl
- Blankets for the sofa
- Distractions for the rough days such as TV box sets, films, books etc.
- A basket of things to carry from bed to sofa, such as tissues, lip balm, hand cream, phone charger and medications

TICKING OFF BREAST CANCER

OTHER CHECKLISTS YOU MAY FIND USEFUL INCLUDE:

- Questions to ask your surgeon, nurse or oncologist
- Pre-operation checklist In collaboration with Dr Nazarain
- What to pack for your surgery
- Preparing for recovery after surgery
- Questions to ask before starting chemotherapy
- What to take to chemotherapy
- Newly diagnosed with breast cancer



Visit futuredreams.org.uk/information-hub for further practical tips, expert advice, personal stories and signposts to further information for people impacted by breast cancer, provided by people impacted by breast cancer.