

Transcript of 'How is chemotherapy given?' information video

Title slide: How is chemotherapy given?

Jeni Jones, Specialist Nurse: My name is Jeni. I'm one of the specialist nurses at Pancreatic Cancer UK, and I work on the [Support Line](#) where we give advice and support to all of those affected by pancreatic cancer.

[Chemotherapy](#) is one of the main treatments for pancreatic cancer. There are different types of chemotherapy used for pancreatic cancer. Your doctor will help to decide what treatment is right for you.

Title slide: How is chemotherapy given?

Jeni Jones, Specialist Nurse: Most chemotherapies are given at the hospital chemotherapy unit. They are given as an outpatient, which means you won't have to stay overnight in hospital.

You may be [given your chemotherapy](#) as an injection into your vein, which will take a few minutes. Or you may be given it as an infusion, which would take anything from 30 minutes up to a few hours. Sometimes you may need to have your chemotherapy over a longer period of time. If this is the case, you will be able to have a small pump which you can take home with you.

If you are having the drug [Capecitabine](#), this is a tablet form of chemotherapy and you can take this at home. Your doctor or nurse will always discuss how your chemotherapy will be given and how long it will be given over.

If you're having your chemotherapy as an infusion, you may have this via a [cannula](#). A cannula is a small thin plastic tube, which can be placed in your lower arm or in the back of your hand. To the end of this we would attach a drip and this is how your chemotherapy is given.

Some drugs may need to be given over a longer period of time. To help us do this, we would put a [central line](#) in. This will be put in at the beginning of your chemotherapy and will stay in for the whole duration of the course of chemotherapy. It may be put in your upper arm, or it may be put in your chest. Central lines are longer tubes which are put into bigger veins to help deliver chemotherapy.

Stuart, living with pancreatic cancer: It involved first of all, putting a line in from here. A line means a tube from here, all the way underneath the skin into one of the chambers of my heart, which was a procedure that was painless, completely painless. And so they just hooked me up to the machine, there was no stabbing or cannulas every time.

Title slide: How often will I have chemotherapy?

Jeni Jones, Specialist Nurse: Chemotherapy is given in [cycles](#). A cycle is the length of time it takes to give the drugs and to have a rest period. Chemotherapy cycles may last for two, three or four weeks depending on the drugs that are given.

Stuart, living with pancreatic cancer: So I'd have three days where I was actively getting chemotherapy, four and a half hours as an inpatient on the ward and the rest of the time having it pumped in from the thing that was about the size of a teacup. And then I had 10 days of normality until the whole cycle repeated itself. And that was for six cycles all in all, x2.

Jeni Jones, Specialist Nurse: Before each cycle of chemotherapy, you will have a blood test taken to make sure that everything is okay for you to have the next lot of chemotherapy. The number of cycles you will have will depend on how well the treatment is working. Your doctor or nurse will give you information about how many cycles of chemotherapy you're going to have. If you are unsure about anything do ensure that you ask.

Carol, in recovery from pancreatic cancer: My routines on the days of my chemo, I'd get up in the morning. I'd have to take certain medications four hours before and I'd already given blood at least two days before to make sure that my blood counts were okay for me to have chemo. Usually my treatment would last about four hours because they give you what's called a flush first of all to make sure that your lines and your veins are open and clear. And then they give you the infusion of chemotherapy. Then after that, you'd have another flush to clean out your veins and things and then you'd be allowed home. That was my day.

Stuart, living with pancreatic cancer: I'd start at nine o'clock hooked up to the machine which was on a tripod with wheels so if you wanted to go for a wee you could just wheel it into the loo with you. I passed the time of day by my iPad and watching loads movies. Listening to my headphones.

Jeni Jones, Specialist Nurse: If you'd like more information about how chemotherapy is given please visit the [Pancreatic Cancer UK website](http://pancreaticcancer.org.uk), pancreaticcancer.org.uk. Or you can call the [Support Line](#) nurses on **0808 801 0707** or you can also email us on nurse@pancreaticcancer.org.uk