



Things to Gather BEFORE You Start Chemotherapy from Community Members

1. GROCERY LIST

- Fresh fruit (e.g. pears, apples, berries, and bananas)
- Dried fruits (e.g. prunes, dried apricots, raisins, and figs)
- Prune juice
- Nuts (e.g. almonds, pecans, and walnuts)
- Lemons or limes to add to water
- Grains, cereal, and pasta with high fiber
- Unsweetened applesauce
- Fresh, high-fiber vegetables (e.g. carrots and broccoli)
- Protein and iron-rich foods (e.g. nuts, fish, tofu, and meats)
- Crackers
- Sugar-free gum, candy, or mints
- Tea in all different flavors, including a laxative tea in case of constipation

2. FOR THE KITCHEN

- Freezer storage containers so you can cook and freeze meals ahead
- Plastic or bamboo silverware

3. FOR YOUR HYGIENE AND LOOKS

- Biotène oral wash (plus one in travel size)
- Unscented moisturizer (plus one in travel size)
- Sunscreen (visit the EWG Sunscreen Guide for best choices)
- Lip balm
- Hand sanitizer (plus one in travel size)
- Toothbrush sanitizer
- Packet of new toothbrushes
- Waterpik (instead of flossing)
- Pack of flushable moist wipes
- Squirt bottle for cleansing irritated skin/privates
- Tissue box and on-the-go tissue packs
- False eyelashes, wig, scarves
- Unscented hand cream

4. FOR CLEANING

- New or washable shower curtain liner
- Lint roller for pillow
- Nontoxic dish soap and hand cream
- Disinfecting wipes (e.g. Clorox or Lysol)
- Rubber gloves for washing

5. FOR THE MEDICINE CABINET — Consult your doctor about all medications and supplements

- Artificial tears for dry eyes (e.g. Renew or Similasan)
- Imodium or Pepto-Bismol for diarrhea
- Acidophilus capsules for yeast infections
- Pain reliever (e.g. Tylenol or Advil)
- Regular Claritin for joint pain
- Supplements (some dietitians recommend calcium citrate, magnesium, and vitamin D3 to combat bone loss)
- Pepcid AC or Nexium for reflux/indigestion
- Laxatives (e.g. Colace, Miralax, or Senekot)
- Thermometer
- Blood pressure cuff
- Ask your doctor about an antidepressant, anxiety medication, and sleeping medication if necessary

6. FOR YOUR COMFORT

- Soft, seam-free hat for sleeping
- Satin or silk pillowcase
- Slippers
- Hair net
- Comfortable, stretchy pants and cozy sweaters and shoes
- A wrap, pashmina, or blanket



Tips BEFORE & DURING Chemotherapy *from Community Members*

1. PRACTICAL TIPS

- Have a hair plan if you are going to lose it: Cold caps, wig, and/or scarf. Consider getting your hair cut short before treatment.
- Order a temporary handicap placard.
- Talk with your employer ahead of time about time off and Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA).
- Keep phone numbers handy, including your doctors, nurse's station, drug store, social worker, and insurance carrier.
- Discuss fertility preservation options with your doctor, if relevant.
- Get your teeth cleaned before treatment begins.
- Automate your bill-paying.
- Consider organizing cleaning help.
- Get a refillable water bottle for carrying around.
- Get thank you cards for the gifts and meals you may receive.
- Gather plenty of good reading material.
- Start a blog or CaringBridge site to communicate and organize logistics such as meals and rides.
- Download favorite music and consider a meditation CD.
- Download movies onto a laptop or tablet.
- Hire someone to help mow the lawn or take care of your garden.
- Join the Breastcancer.org Community and talk with others. You will get through this!
- Prepare a "chemobag:" Assemble a small, portable, makeup-type bag that includes things that are good to have on hand when you're out and about: digital thermometer, painkillers, toothbrush, toothpaste, breath mints, lip balm, unscented hand lotion, eye drops, antibiotic ointment, sanitizer or hand wipes, saltines or animal crackers, tissues, thin cap to ward off any sudden chills, mouth rinse, maxi pad in case of any port or drain mishaps.

2. LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF DURING CHEMOTHERAPY

- Plan your infusion-day clothing: should be comfortable and have elastic band.
- Exercise or move around every day to give you more energy and lift your mood (even 20 minutes count).
- Moisturize whenever possible. After each shower, cover yourself in a high quality, paraben-free, hypoallergenic moisturizer from head to toe.
- Stay hydrated by drinking lots of water. Make it interesting by adding lemon or lime.
- Support your immune system with iron- and protein-rich food.
- Sleep, rest, sleep, rest!
- Make a point to laugh and relax as much as possible.
- Plan something special that you can look forward to after each chemotherapy infusion.
- Hang a "Do Not Disturb" sign on your door to let your neighbors know.
- Wear slippers around the house, especially if you have hard floors, to help with neuropathy. Forget about wearing heels during chemo!
- If getting infusions, download movies on your mobile device and don't forget your headphones!
- Use lots of sunscreen or sun protection.
- Do things that make you happy.
- Accept offers of help!



Tips **BEFORE & DURING** Chemotherapy *from Community Members*

3. INFUSION TIPS

- Some chemotherapy medications can be hard on the veins. At some hospitals, women may automatically have a port surgically implanted. Others may be given the opportunity to use their veins with an IV.
- If you can use an IV, the goal is to keep your veins in good enough health that you can use them for all infusions. Another goal is to 'start low' on the arm so that if one vein is blown, then they can try again higher up. A nurse can go higher on a vein for attempt number 2, but she cannot go lower.
- If you're getting a port, the nurse may clean the port by injecting Heparin into it. A horrible taste can sometimes be avoided by holding your nose while the Heparin is injected.
- A numbing agent may make entry in and out of the port less painful.
- Suck on ice chips during infusions to help avoid mouth sores.

4. NAIL TIPS

- Keep your nails very short to avoid snags and tears.
- Wear gloves when washing dishes and cleaning.
- Try OPI Nail Envy Nail Strengthener or Avoplex cuticle oil. Use Nail Envy as directed, and apply Avoplex twice a day or more often if you can remember. If you work, keep one bottle of Avoplex at work and one at home.
- If your treatment will be turning your nails black (which sometimes happens with Taxotere), consider painting them a dark color before starting the treatment!
- Use cuticle cream daily.
- Do not use acrylics or nail wraps.
- If you are going to get a manicure or pedicure during chemotherapy, bring your own tools. You should also have your own nail clippers or scissors at home that you do not share.
- Use non-acetone-based nail polish remover if you do paint your nails.