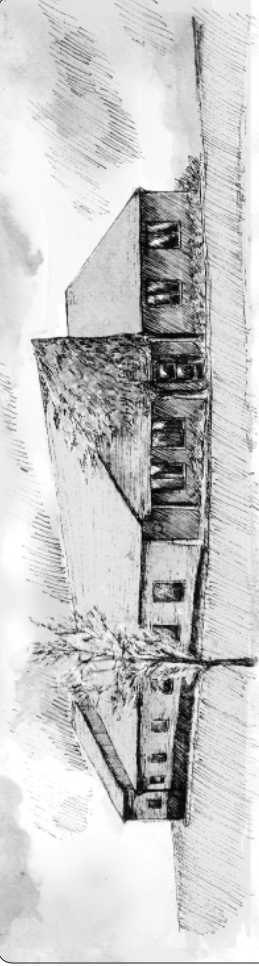


# a patient's guide



## Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre

... supporting people affected by cancer...

- ① Drop-in centre for support and information
- ① Telephone helpline
- ① Complementary therapies\*
- ① Counselling\*
- ① Benefits advice\*
- ① Relaxation classes
- ① Look Good...Feel Better™ beauty workshops
- ① The Way Ahead headwear workshops
- ① Self-help courses

The **Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre** is situated between the Cancer Centre and Gate 3 (White Hill)

Please drop in or call to find out how we may be able to help you

Opening hours: **Monday–Friday: 9.30am–4.30pm**

Mount Vernon Cancer Centre, Northwood, Middlesex HA6 2RN

Telephone Helpline: **020 3826 2555**

Website: **[www.ijmc.org](http://www.ijmc.org)**

\* Service only available to NHS patients under the care of an oncologist based at Mount Vernon Cancer Centre



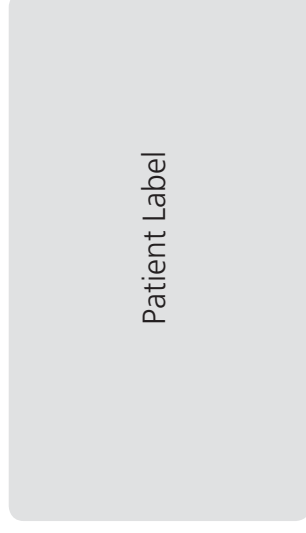
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# Now that you have started your chemotherapy

Please bring this with you every time you attend for treatment

Patient Information Series PI 76



Chemotherapy Regimen:

Scheduling:

Consultant:



**Mount Vernon  
Cancer Centre**

**NHS**  
East and North Hertfordshire  
NHS Trust

## Contacts

If at any time during your course of chemotherapy you become unwell you must contact:

**24 hour Acute Oncology Service**  
**Mount Vernon Cancer Centre: 07825 028855**

Questions about your medications:

Pharmacy (Chemotherapy Suite): ..... 020 3826 2238  
[Mon - Fri, 10am - 4pm]

or for non-urgent queries, ENHT Pharmacy Helpline email:  
.....Medinfo.enhtr@nhs.net

Questions about your appointments:

Hospital switchboard  
(please ask for your Consultant's secretary)  
..... 020 3826 2020

## Consent

It is a legal requirement to have a signed consent form from you before the start of your treatment.

If you have already been given one of these forms, please bring the completed form with you when you come for your first appointment.

If you have not been given a form, this will be discussed with you at your first appointment.

## Identification

Please note that it is a legal requirement for the staff to check your name and details against your treatment sheet every time you attend.

## Pregnancy/fathering a child

Female patients must not be pregnant or become pregnant and male patients must not father a child during a course of chemotherapy or for some months afterwards. **Please discuss this with your cancer specialist.**

If you think there is a chance, however small, of you or your partner being pregnant during treatment, it is extremely important that you discuss this with your oncologist, radiographer or nurse as soon as possible.

Female patients will be asked to confirm their pregnancy status prior to radiotherapy. This applies to all women between the ages of 12 - 55 years. This is a legal requirement.

This publication has been produced by the Information team at the Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre. Contributors include professionals, patients and carers from Mount Vernon Cancer Centre who have expertise and experience in the topics covered by this publication. All our publications are reviewed and updated regularly. If you would like any details of the references used to write this information please contact the



Lynda Jackson  
Macmillan Centre  
LJMC on 020 3826 2555.







## What can I do if I feel sick (nausea) or vomit?

These are the anti-sickness medicines I have been sent home with:

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If these are not helping, please contact the 24 hour Acute Oncology Service for advice on other medications listed in the tables below.

## If you are taking Capecitabine tablets and vomit more than once in 24 hours or find it hard to eat or drink, stop taking Capecitabine and contact the cancer centre (see page 2).

### Common anti-sickness drugs

Drug	How to take	General advice and common side-effects
<b>Dexamethasone*</b> (steroid)  Available as soluble tablets, liquid or injection  *Haematology patients may not receive steroids.	Take your tablets with breakfast and lunch to help prevent them affecting your sleep and upsetting your stomach.	Steroids can disturb your sleep and cause indigestion. If you feel a burning sensation or pain in your stomach please tell your doctor or nurse at your next clinic appointment. Feeling 'flushed' or 'red faced' can be a normal reaction while you are taking steroid tablets.  <b>Diabetic patients:</b> Dexamethasone may increase blood sugar levels. If you have diabetes, you should monitor your blood sugar level closely. Tell your doctor or nurse if these levels become uncontrollable or do not return to what is normal for you once the steroids have stopped.

## Other help and support

The Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre (LJMC) offers information and support to patients and their families and is located next to Chemotherapy Suite by Gate 3. The staff at the LJMC work as part of the overall team caring for you.

People who have cancer often say that during their illness they experience a range of emotions. Many find it to be a stressful, anxious and confusing time. Please feel free to drop in before, during and/or after any of your visits to Mount Vernon Cancer Centre to find out more about the LJMC services that you may find helpful.

The volunteers and healthcare professionals at the LJMC provide help, support and information in a relaxed setting to help patients cope with cancer and its treatment.

LJMC services include a range of complementary therapies, counselling, relaxation sessions and financial advice. You can drop in without an appointment or call the LJMC helpline on 020 3826 2555. More information is on the back of this leaflet.

### If you normally pay for NHS prescriptions

People undergoing treatment for cancer do not have to pay NHS prescription charges if they have a valid medical exemption certificate. To get an exemption certificate, ask your GP for an application form.









- try getting some fresh air before meals to distract you from the thought of food
- avoid tight or restrictive clothing
- try rinsing your mouth with fizzy water between meals
- suck ice cubes
- try to sit down and relax, but avoid lying down straight after eating

**Can complementary therapies help?**

Acupressure bands (available from chemists) can help to control feelings of sickness. These apply pressure to specific parts of the body, usually the wrist.

Complementary therapy and relaxation sessions may also help. Please ask in the Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre (LJMC) for more details or see leaflet PI 16 A Patient's Guide to Complementary Therapies at Mount Vernon Cancer Centre.

**Further information about feeling and being sick**

- Controlling nausea and vomiting (anti-emetic therapy) – Macmillan Factsheet [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)
- Types of anti-sickness drugs; How you take anti-sickness drugs; Side effects of anti-sickness drugs – Cancer Research UK leaflets [www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org)

These leaflets are also available from the LJMC.

If you would like further advice, please contact the Mount Vernon Cancer Centre Dietitian, tel: 020 3826 2125.

Please remember to bring this booklet with you to your next appointment

Results		Side-effects as they happen to you		Nausea (feeling sick)		Tiredness		Constipation		Best days		Worst days	
Date: -----	Regimen: -----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Hb: -----	Plts: -----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
-----	WBC: -----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
-----	Neuts: -----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
-----	Cycle no: -----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Fill in here the dates, starting with day 1 of cycle 4 of your chemotherapy







## 2. Drink plenty of fluids

Make sure you drink plenty of fluids. You should aim to drink at least 8 - 10 glasses each day. Avoid alcohol.

## 3. Try some natural remedies

You may want to try taking natural remedies such as syrup of figs and prune juice which may help.

## 4. Try some exercise

It is important to do some gentle exercise such as walking each day.

If you cannot walk by yourself then ask a friend, carer or relative to go with you.

## 5. Further information if you have constipation

- Managing the symptoms of cancer (Macmillan Cancer Support (MCS) booklet)
- Healthy eating and cancer (MCS booklet)

These are available from the Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre or from Macmillan Cancer Support at [www.Macmillan.org.uk](http://www.Macmillan.org.uk)

Date: -----		Regimen: -----		Cycle no: -----		Results	
Hb: -----		Pits: -----		WBC: -----		Neuts: -----	
Side-effects as they happen to you	1 Nov	✓					
Nausea (feeling sick)	2 Nov	✓					
Tiredness	3 Nov	✓					
	4 Nov	✓					
	5 Nov	✓					
Constipation	6 Nov	✓					
	7 Nov		✓				
	8 Nov		✓				
	9 Nov		✓				
	10 Nov		✓				
	11 Nov		✓				
	12 Nov		✓				
	13 Nov		✓				
	14 Nov		✓				
	15 Nov		✓				
	16 Nov		✓				
	17 Nov		✓				
	18 Nov		✓				
	19 Nov		✓				
	20 Nov		✓				
Best days							
Worst days							

**How do you feel during your chemotherapy? - your personal record**  
 Fill out a chart each day during each cycle of your treatment. Then bring this booklet with you when you return for your next treatment. It will help the team treating you to ease your side-effects.  
 This is an example of how to fill in your personal chart.

## What can I do if I am having diarrhoea?

These are the anti-diarrhoeal medicines I have been sent home with:

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You should aim to drink 8 - 10 glasses each day

**If you have diarrhoea that is not helped by your medication please contact the Acute Oncology Service (see page 2).**

If you have **not** been sent home with medication for managing diarrhoea, please contact the 24 hour Acute Oncology Service for advice. They will decide if the diarrhoea is a side effect of your treatment and advise you how to manage it. Do not take any over-the-counter medication for diarrhoea until you have spoken with your health care team.

**If you are taking Capecitabine tablets and have 4 loose bowel movements per day more than usual or diarrhoea at night, stop taking Capecitabine straight away and contact the Acute Oncology Service (see page 2).**

## Common mouthwashes

Drug	General advice	How the drug is given
Chlorhexidine Mouthwash (Corsodyl®) (pink colour)	Use four times a day - <b>after</b> each meal and at bedtime. Can stain teeth.	Swish 10mls and spit. This is <b>not</b> to be swallowed.
Diffiam (green colour)	Use four times a day - 30 minutes <b>before</b> meals and at bedtime to help your mouth feel more comfortable.	Swish 15 mls and spit. This is <b>not</b> to be swallowed. Diffiam makes your mouth feel numb and less painful. Take care with hot food and drinks as your mouth may not feel they are too hot due to it being numbed.
Dispersible Aspirin tablets	Disperse one aspirin (300mg tablet) in a small amount of warm water. Use four times a day - 30 minutes before meals and at bedtime.	Swish or gargle and spit. Do not swallow. The aspirin/water mixture makes your mouth feel less painful.
Raspberry mucilage with dispersible Aspirin tablets (prescribed only by hospital team)	Mix 10ml of mucilage with one 300mg dispersible Aspirin tablet - dissolve in water - use four times a day.	Swish and spit. If the mucilage is used alone it can be swallowed. The mixture makes your mouth feel less painful.
Oxetacaine and Antacid mouthwash (prescribed only by hospital team)	Use 5-10 ml four times a day.	Swish. This can be swallowed. Take care with hot food and drinks as mouth may feel numb.

If you have any queries about using any of these drugs please contact the Mount Vernon Hospital pharmacist (see page 2).

## What can I do if my mouth is sore?

These are the pain relief medicines and mouth washes that I have been sent home with:

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If these are not helping, please contact the 24 hour Acute Oncology Service for advice on other medications listed in the table on the next page.

**If you are taking Capecitabine tablets and develop painful mouth ulcers or swelling in your mouth, stop taking Capecitabine straight away and contact the Acute Oncology Service (see page 2).**

Some chemotherapy drugs can make your mouth and throat sore. You may experience:

- redness or soreness of the gums or mouth
- bleeding gums
- white patches on the tongue or inside the mouth
- mouth ulcers

This may cause chewing and swallowing to become more difficult. If this happens and solid foods become difficult to swallow, you may need to change their consistency or texture by having a soft or blended diet.

Keeping your mouth clean is very important. If possible, brush your teeth twice daily, floss daily and rinse after each meal to remove debris and to reduce the risk of infection. You may use mouthwash, but avoid those which contain alcohol. Your local pharmacist will be able to advise you.

If you experience a sore mouth, try to avoid eating spicy, very hot or cold food or acidic food such as citrus fruits. Smoking and alcohol can also increase the soreness.

## Common anti-diarrhoeal drugs

Drug	General advice	How the drug is given
<b>Loperamide</b> (also called Imodium®)	This is used to treat sudden, short-lived attacks and long-lasting diarrhoea in adults. It works by slowing down gut movement and making the stools more solid and less frequent. If you already use loperamide for a chronic condition, please discuss your dose with your doctor or nurse.	When diarrhoea starts, you will usually take two capsules to begin with and then one after each episode of diarrhoea. Never take more than eight capsules in any 24 hour period, unless your doctor or nurse has said that this is safe for you.
<b>Codeine phosphate</b>	This belongs to a group of medicines known as opioid pain killers. These are used to relieve pain, suppress cough and treat diarrhoea. Do not take the tablets for longer than is needed.	The usual dose for adults is one or two 30mg tablets, three to four times a day. No more than eight tablets must be taken in 24 hours. These may make you feel drowsy and light headed. If they do, you should not drive or operate machinery.

If you have any queries about using any of these drugs please contact the Mount Vernon Hospital pharmacist (see page 2).



## Helpful tips for managing diarrhoea

This information is a guide to help you deal with the symptoms of diarrhoea until you can talk to your doctor. It does not replace medical advice. **If your symptoms persist you must inform your doctor.**

### Managing your diet

It is important for everybody to eat fibre in their diet but if you have any symptoms of diarrhoea, eating fibre will make them worse.

#### 1. Reduce the amount of fibre you eat each day

High fibre foods may make your symptoms worse and you should eat less of it than usual. You will need to check with your doctor or dietitian how long you should do this for.

High fibre foods to avoid include:

- wholegrain breakfast cereals
- wholemeal bread and flour
- brown rice
- wholemeal pasta
- fresh fruit and vegetables with their skins
- beans and nuts
- dried fruit such as figs, prunes, apricots or dates

#### 2. Be careful about eating other foods which may make your symptoms worse, so eat less of them.

These include:

- spicy foods
- rich, greasy, fried foods
- foods containing caffeine (coffee and chocolate)
- dairy products (milk, butter, yogurt, cheese, cream)
- very cold or very hot drinks
- products containing sorbitol (sugar-free mints or gum)

### 3. Eat foods which may help your symptoms by making your stools firmer

These include:

- chicken (without the skin on)
- chicken soup
- fish
- eggs
- rice and pasta
- potatoes (but without skins)
- bananas
- white bread
- cooked fruit (particularly stewed apple)
- low-fibre breakfast cereals such as cornflakes
- dry crackers

Try having drinks at 'room' temperature.

If you have diarrhoea, this may put you off eating. It may help if you eat smaller amounts of food more often, rather than trying to eat large meals.

### 4. Drink plenty of fluids

When you have the symptoms of diarrhoea, you lose fluids. It is important that these are replaced so you don't get dehydrated. Drink as often as you can, even if it is only small amounts. Avoid alcoholic drinks. The best types of fluids to have include:

- water
- herbal teas
- clear soups
- any soft drinks (except 'diet' products). If fizzy, let them go flat.

Electrolyte sachets can also be bought from a pharmacy. These help to replace minerals lost through diarrhoea. Please ask your pharmacist for information about when to take these.