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# Chemotherapy

Traditionally when people think of treatment for cancer they think of chemotherapy however there are now a number of forms of treatments which may be given, these are referred to as systemic anti-cancer treatments or SACT, chemotherapy is one of these. Historically chemotherapy was given predominantly through a vein however nowadays, your treatment can be given in a variety of different ways including as a tablet, an injection under the skin, an injection into a vein or into the spinal area.

We offer a wide variety of SACT or drug treatments. These include:

- cytotoxic chemotherapy
- immunotherapy
- molecular targeted agents
- monoclonal antibodies
- hormone therapy.

The longer standing treatments of this kind are called cytotoxic chemotherapy. “Cyto” means cell, and “toxic” means poisonous. The aim of these drugs is to poison and destroy the cancerous cells in your body. They may also affect non-cancerous cells, causing potentially unpleasant side effects.

As well as the longstanding chemotherapy treatments, we also use newer drugs. These work in a more targeted way to kill cancer cells, while reducing the impact on non-cancer cells in the body. These newer drugs are sometimes referred to as monoclonal antibodies, immunotherapy and biological agents.

Each type of SACT can be given alone but commonly cancer is treated with a combination of different drugs. Combining treatments enables more cancer cells to be killed and increases the chance of a good outcome of your treatment.

What kind of cancer treatment is recommended for you will depend on a number of factors. These include:

- What kind of cancer you have
- The extent to which the cancer has progressed
- Other factors revealed in laboratory tests

We tailor your treatment, taking all these factors into account. Before you start chemotherapy, your treatment team will discuss your treatment plan with you face to face, explaining exactly what will be done. This will also give you the opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

As your treatment progresses, you will always be able to ask your team whatever you need to know.

The majority of SACT treatments are given as a day treatment. This means that you come in for your treatment and can go home on the same day. We also have clinics in some GP surgeries enabling you to have treatment closer to home.

In some cases, eg where a longer treatment is required or because of the nature of a particular cancer, patients need to be admitted to hospital as an inpatient for treatment.