

# HOW IS PRIMARY BREAST CANCER TREATED?

## Chemotherapy

**BREAST  
CANCER  
NOW** The research  
& care charity

This information is for anyone who has primary breast cancer and wants to know more about how it is treated.

It is written by Breast Cancer Now, a charity that helps people who have breast cancer and other breast conditions.

You can also get Breast Cancer Now's longer free booklet **Treating primary breast cancer.**

# WHAT IS IN THIS INFORMATION?

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In this information there is a simple summary of chemotherapy to treat primary breast cancer. Click on a question below to go straight to that section.

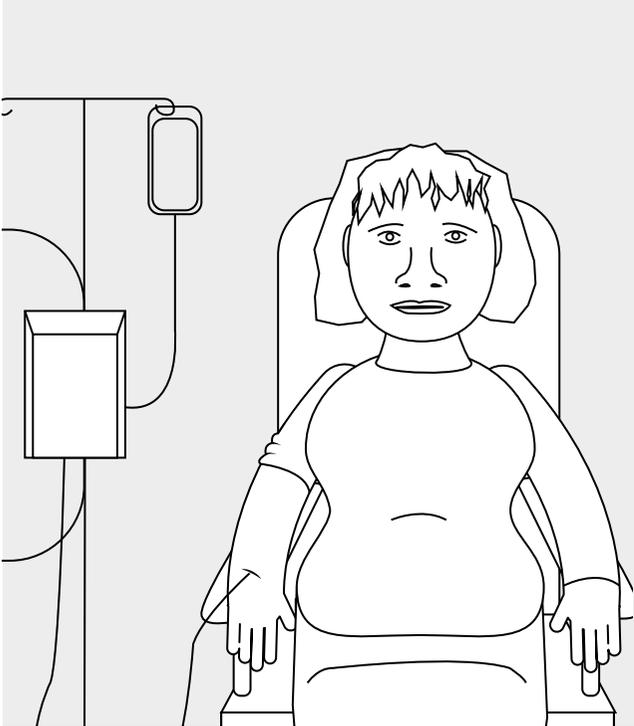
## CHEMOTHERAPY

**What is chemotherapy?**

**What are the side effects of chemotherapy?**

# CHEMOTHERAPY

## What is chemotherapy?



Chemotherapy uses drugs to kill cancer cells.

There are different sorts of drugs that can be used in different combinations.

The drugs used for treating breast cancer are usually given into a vein in the hand or arm. Giving drugs this way is called 'intravenously'.

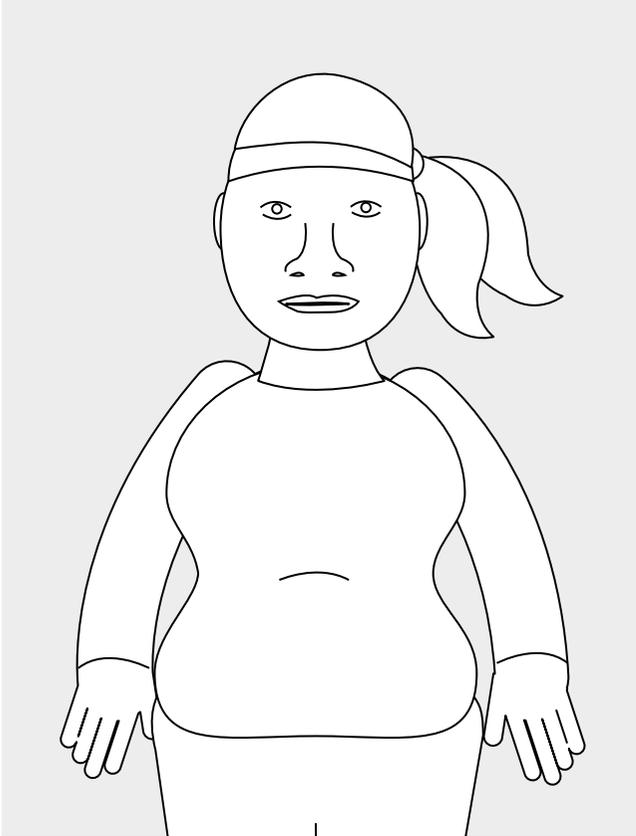
Chemotherapy is most often given after you have had breast cancer surgery. The aim is to kill any breast cancer cells that might have spread from your breast to other parts of your body.

It can also be given before surgery. This will usually be to try to make the cancer smaller so that it is easier to take out.

Chemotherapy is sometimes given before surgery because of the type of breast cancer being treated.

# SIDE EFFECTS

## What are the side effects of chemotherapy?



The drugs used in chemotherapy can cause a lot of different side effects. Some of the most common side effects are listed here.

- A higher risk of infection, bruising and bleeding
- Feeling and being sick
- Your hair getting thinner or falling out
- Having a sore mouth
- Being tired
- Lowering or stopping your chance of having a baby

Always tell your breast care nurse or treatment team how your treatment is affecting you. They often have ideas to help make side effects easier to cope with.

# INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

## Where can I find out more about my treatments?

There are more simple summary slides about treating primary breast cancer. Find them by clicking on subject areas at this website page

[breastcancernow.org/primarytreatment](https://breastcancernow.org/primarytreatment)

You can get Breast Cancer Now's longer free booklet  
**Treating primary breast cancer**

Call our Helpline on **0808 800 6000**