Chemotherapy for Uterine (Endometrial) Cancer

by Debra Wood, RN

En Español (Spanish Version)

Cancer chemotherapy is the use of drugs to kill cancer cells. Unlike radiation and surgery, which are localized treatments, chemotherapy is a systemic treatment, meaning the drugs travel throughout the whole body. This means chemotherapy can reach cancer cells that may have spread (metastasized) to other areas.

Chemotherapy is not commonly used for endometrial cancer. The treatment may be ordered for Stage IV disease, when the cancer has spread to other parts of the body, or if the disease recurs. The drugs are often given in combination and in cycles. All of these drugs are given intravenously at the doctor’s office or in the hospital.

Chemotherapy Drugs Used for Uterine Cancer:

- Cisplatin
- Cyclophosphamide (Cytoxan)
- Doxorubicin (Adriamycin)
- Carboplatin
- Paclitaxel
- Ifosfamide

Combination chemotherapy regimens used in uterine cancer include:

- CAP (Cyclophosphamide, Adriamycin, Cisplatin)
- Cisplatin and doxorubicin
- Cyclophosphamide and doxorubicin
- Carboplatin and Paclitaxel

Effectiveness

Doctors have yet to find a chemotherapy regimen that is curative or highly effective for advanced or recurrent uterine cancer. In various studies, the response rates to chemotherapy range from 36% to 67%. However, even in patients who respond to treatment, the response lasts only four to eight months on average.

Chemotherapy is sometimes combined with hormonal therapy for the treatment of advanced or recurrent uterine cancer.

REFERENCES:


American Cancer Society website. Available at: http://www.cancer.org/.


