Improving the Chemotherapy Experience

Greater Washington Coalition for Cancer Survivors
Improving the Chemotherapy Experience

*Been there, done that – a personal experience coping with chemotherapy*

Saturday, February 23, 2002
Washington Cancer Institute
Seigel Auditorium

* A talk by *

Lawrence W. Chinnery, Sr. (Larry)
V.P. Greater Washington Coalition for Cancer Survivors (GWCCS)
Been There, Done That …

How to cope with chemotherapy

- Introduction
- How to Prepare for Chemotherapy
- Anticipated vs. Actual Experience
- My Personal Side Effects
- Controlling the Side Effects
- Getting Help From Others
- Marshalling Your Resources
- Dealing with Discouragement
- Life’s Changes
- Larry Before, During and After Chemo
- Déjà Vu and Fini
Introduction

- Improving your chemotherapy experience
- Who am I?
- How am I qualified to speak to you today?
How to Prepare for Receiving Chemotherapy

- Don’t push the panic button
- Do your research
- Seek support from a variety of resources
- Hold discussions with your doctors
- Talk with your oncology nurses
- Avoid treatment schedule disruptions
- Set goals for your treatment
Anticipated vs. Actual Experience with Chemotherapy

- Multiple levels of anticipation – first time, mid-level and ending
- Don’t paint too bad of a picture
- Be realistic, optimistic
- Be prepared for “withdrawal” from treatment
My Personal Side Effects from Chemo

I experienced many side effects including:

- Nausea and vomiting (emesis)
- Cramping
- Multiple vision
- Shingles
My Personal Side Effects from Chemo

I experienced several long-term side effects:

- Extreme fatigue
- Neuropathy
- Migraine headaches
- Chemo brain
Controlling the Side Effects of Chemotherapy

- Ask for help and insist on getting it
- Take control of the physical side effects
- Hold discussions with medical professionals
- Pray or meditate before, during and after chemo
- Eat a balanced diet, but treat yourself often
- Get plenty of sleep
Controlling the Side Effects of Chemotherapy

- Find something to laugh about every day
- Exercise as possible
- Participate in organized relaxation therapy, meditation, yoga, visualization or hypnosis
- Reward yourself upon reaching your goals
- Massage therapy
- Swimming and whirlpool bath
Getting and Accepting Help from Others

HELP!
Marshalling Your Resources
Marshalling Your Resources

- Talk to family members and friends
- Visit several support groups
- Join the support group that meets your needs
- Ask healthcare staff, clergy about local programs
- Talk to others who have “been through” chemotherapy
- Contact national and local cancer organizations
- Use the libraries
- Use the Internet (wisely)
Dealing with Discouragement
Life’s Changes

- Physical changes
- Changes in home life
- Changes in work habits
Larry Before Receiving Chemotherapy
Larry After Receiving Chemotherapy
Larry During and After Receiving Chemo

Chemo Guide 1st edition

“One Day at a Time”

“Surviving Cancer in Greater Washington DC”

Chemo Guide 2nd edition

Pain Management Guide

Hospice Guide
Deja Vu
He keeps going, and going, and going!  

Never Give Up!