All About Chemotherapy
What it is and how to cope!
What is Chemotherapy?

- Chemotherapy – often called “chemo” for short- is the use of medicine to destroy cancer cells. Chemo works by attacking cells that grow and divide rapidly (like cancer cells).
- There are many different kinds of chemo and different ways to take chemo.
- Many chemotherapy drugs are given as an infusion through an IV but some are given as injections or shots, and some may be taken as pills.
Chemotherapy Regimens

• Your doctor will determine which regimen is right for you.
• You may receive one chemo drug or a combination of several different drugs.
• Sometimes chemo is given before or after surgery or with radiation therapy
• Targeted Chemotherapy
• The time between treatments or the number of days you receive chemo will vary. For example, you may receive chemo on Day 1 and then not again until day 15. Or you may receive chemo every day for a number of days in a row. This is called a cycle.
Chemotherapy Side Effects

Chemo travels all throughout your body and not just to the cancer cells. Because you have normal cells that divide rapidly, you may experience some side effects. Your nurse and doctor will help you to control your symptoms. Not everyone has side effects but some common side effects are:

- Nausea (upset stomach) and vomiting
- Low blood counts
- Fatigue (feeling tired)
- Hair loss
- Constipation
- Diarrhea
- Numbness and tingling in hands and feet
- Sores in your mouth
- Chemo brain (feeling “foggy” and forgetful)
Myths about Chemotherapy

- Chemotherapy makes you feel sick all the time.
- You cannot work while on chemotherapy
- All chemotherapy makes your hair fall out
- If you do not have side effects the chemo is not working

- Everyone is different but many people do not have side effects or are able to manage them so they do not interfere too much with their life. Many people remain active and continue to work during treatment. Not all drugs cause hair loss and if it does occur it is temporary. Your hair will grow back. You do not have to feel sick for the chemo to work
Questions?