

# WELCOME TO UAB INFUSION THERAPY

Our staff would like to personally thank you for allowing us the privilege of providing you care during your treatment. Your UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center physician has scheduled your infusion appointments with our infusion unit located at The Kirklin Clinic of UAB Hospital. All of our professional and caring nurses are chemotherapy-certified, registered nurses. It is their goal each day to keep your wait as brief as possible and to communicate with you and your family in a timely manner.

Please keep in mind that we adhere to the scheduled appointment times of each patient. While we advise you to come at least one hour prior to treatment time for your lab work, you will be called on the basis of lab results and time of appointment. Various unforeseen events may interrupt our schedule at any time. Be assured you will be called for your treatment as soon as possible.

We understand the anxiety regarding the unknown associated with this event in your life. The goal of this booklet is to provide information that will be helpful to you during your treatment. We have listed answers to questions frequently asked by new patients and their caregivers, as well as guidelines for the infusion center. You will meet with the nurse educator prior to your infusion to discuss and receive printed materials in regard to your specific chemotherapy regimen.

**Thank you for choosing UAB.**

# HOW TO REACH YOUR TEAM DAY OR NIGHT

- **The Kirklín Clinic of UAB Hospital:** (205) 801-9034
- **The Kirklín Clinic at Acton Road:** (205) 978-0250, Option 3
- **Infusion therapy scheduling:** (205) 801-5940

## CLINIC PHONE TRIAGE HOURS

- **Monday-Thursday:** 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- **Friday:** 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

## AFTER HOURS

- **UAB paging operator:** (205) 934-3411

A hematology/oncology physician is on call at all times if you're unable to reach someone else at the clinic.

## REMEMBER

- Be sure to ask your physician for any prescriptions you may need at your clinic visits.
- If your insurance changes, call before coming for your next appointment. This will avoid delays if new requirements are necessary before your visit.

# INFUSION THERAPY UNIT VISITOR POLICY

At UAB Medicine, we believe that the presence and support of a patient's family member or friend helps enhance care quality, safety, communication, and patient satisfaction. The O'Neal Infusion Therapy Center at The Kirklin Clinic of UAB Hospital and at The Kirklin Clinic at Acton Road, along with Apheresis Services, are committed to maintaining a comfortable and safe environment that supports these goals.

**To help us maintain such an environment, please understand and observe the following rules:**

- The Infusion Clinic can accommodate one seated visitor during a patient's treatment. The visitor must be age 12 or older and is encouraged to ask questions about the patient's treatment.
- Children under the age of 12 are not allowed in the infusion waiting room or patient care areas.
- Exceptions to the visitor policy can be made and will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the patient's nurse or the nursing supervisor. If the clinic is crowded, or if patient safety could be affected, we may not be able to accommodate a family member or other visitor.
- The patient has the right to refuse or limit visitation. Visitors should take steps to prevent spreading germs to patients or others in the clinic.

## SKIN AND NAIL CHANGES

- Protect your skin from sun exposure. Use sunscreen and lip balm when outside.
- Use mild soaps. These contain lanolin and do not dry your skin.
- Take warm (not hot) baths and showers and pat—not rub—your skin to dry it.
- Prevent cuts and scrapes.
- Cover a cut or scrape with a clean bandage until it heals.
- Use lotions and creams to keep your skin moisturized—ask your nurse which brands are best.
- Do not use tanning beds.
- Try shaving less often. Stop shaving if your skin becomes sore.
- Always wear gloves when your hands are exposed to water with detergents or chemicals. Also wear gloves when working in the yard or garden.
- Keep your nails clean and trimmed short. Ask your doctor or nurse before receiving a manicure or pedicure.
- If nails become inflamed, use antibacterial soaps.
- If nails are sore you may try equal parts hydrogen peroxide and water soaks.
- Don't bite your nails.
- Apply petroleum jelly around your nails after cleaning them.
- Don't use fake nails or wraps.
- Avoid tight-fitting shoes.

**If skin or nail problems persist, ask your doctor for advice.**

# NUTRITION

Nutrition is a powerful weapon you control in your battle with cancer. It also can be quite a challenge at times. Research has proven that well-nourished patients respond better to treatment. You should evaluate your diet and make necessary changes to obtain a well-balanced diet.

We recommend a high-calorie, high-protein diet while undergoing cancer treatment. Cancer causes your metabolism to increase, causing you to burn more calories. This can cause you to lose weight if you burn more calories than you are taking in. Also, cancer treatments sometimes destroy good cells along with the cancer cells. Protein helps to rebuild cells and tissues, which increases your overall stamina. Be sure to include fruits and vegetables daily for a well-balanced diet.

Numerous sources of protein are available aside from the most commonly recognized source, meat. We often find our patients do not tolerate the taste, smell, or texture of meats. If this is the case for you, it is important to find a replacement. Other sources of protein include eggs, nuts, peanut butter, dried peas and beans, cheeses, and milk products. Convenient, easy-to-carry items such as nutrition bars and drinks also are readily available, as well as instant breakfast mixes that can be mixed with ice cream to increase calories, vitamins, and minerals. We also recommend a multivitamin every day to ensure a balance of necessary nutrients and minerals.

Instead of eating three large meals a day, try five or six small, frequent meals. Try to keep a schedule and eat at set times instead of eating only when you are hungry.

We encourage you to drink at least 64 ounces of fluids every day (at least 32 ounces coming from noncaffeinated beverages). This is important to rid your body of the chemotherapy drugs. You will experience more side effects for longer periods of time if you do not flush the drugs out of your system quickly. However, you should limit liquids with meals to keep you from feeling full before you've eaten your food.

A nutrition consult is available at your request. Be sure to speak with your doctor regarding an appointment with a dietician.

## OTHER QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

**Will I lose my hair?** Most chemotherapy drugs cause alopecia (hair loss). Your doctor will talk with you if the drug you are to receive causes alopecia. This usually occurs within two or three weeks after first treatment. You may lose all body hair. If you are told you will experience hair loss, you may want to have your hair cut shorter or shaved and consider purchasing a wig to match your hair. Protect your head with sunscreen, hats, or scarves after hair loss. Use mild (baby) shampoo. Hair usually begins to grow back two to three months after treatment is completed.

**Do I continue taking my other prescribed medicines?** You will continue with your regularly prescribed medicines unless directed otherwise by your physician.

**Can I have alcoholic beverages while on treatment?** We recommend avoiding alcoholic beverages, especially on treatment days. Consult your doctor for advice regarding when you may drink alcohol and in what amount.

**Can I be around small children while on treatment?** Yes, unless they are sick. If you are a caregiver for small children, avoid direct contact as much as possible. Always be sure both you and the child have washed your hands before touching.

**Can I take care of my pets?** Always protect yourself with gloves when in direct contact with animal waste. Immediately wash your hands afterwards. Have others empty litter boxes if possible, and always wear gloves if you have to do this yourself. Be sure to keep litter boxes away from eating areas. Avoid scratches or bites, and if you do receive scratches or bites, wash wounds well with soap and water. Avoid pets licking you, especially wounds, cuts, or directly in your mouth. If your pet is indoor/outdoor, wipe their paws after they return into your home. Avoid cleaning birdcages. Let someone else help with animal care whenever possible.

**What about intimate relations with my significant other?** Little is known about effects your body fluids may have on others after receiving chemotherapy. We recommend that you always use condoms or abstain from relations for 48 hours after treatment. It has been advised to prevent others from coming in contact with urine, bowel movements, vomit, or other fluids during this time frame. Wash soiled linens separately from other laundry.

**Is it safe for me to get in a hot tub while taking treatment?** Avoid hot tubs or spas while on treatment.

**Can I exercise while on treatment?** We encourage you to exercise. New data indicates that exercise may improve survival. Recent studies show exercise and a healthy diet are associated with lower cancer recurrence rates and longer survival.