
Gynecological cancer and chemoradiotherapy

These instructions contain information on chemoradiotherapy that is used to treat gynecological cancer. This treatment **includes radiotherapy and simultaneous chemotherapy.**

In chemoradiotherapy, radiotherapy is targeted at the site of illness, and it is administered externally around the stomach or the outer genitalia. Chemotherapy is administered intravenously in order to enhance the effects of radiotherapy. The chemotherapy agents are carried by the bloodstream to different parts of the body and can also target cells that are not visible in imaging or blood samples.

Carrying out the treatment

The chemotherapy is administered at the Turku university hospital (Tyks) **at the T-hospital's pharmacotherapy outpatient clinic.** The treatment takes place once a week in the morning, after which you will be transported to receive radiotherapy in the afternoon.

The radiotherapy is administered at the Tyks **T-hospital's department of radiotherapy** on weekdays. On the treatment days you are not scheduled to have chemotherapy, you can arrive directly at the department of radiotherapy at your scheduled time.

Blood tests and urine sample

Chemotherapy affects healthy tissue as well, for example your blood cells. For this reason, blood and urine sample testing is carried out before each chemotherapy treatment. You can book an appointment for sampling either at Tykslab laboratories (<https://tyks.vihta.com>) or at your local health center's laboratory. The samples are taken 2 days before treatment.

Chemotherapy

Cisplatin is the most common chemotherapy agent used in the treatment of gynecological cancer, but other chemotherapy agents can also be used on a case-by-case basis. The medication **passes through your kidneys.** This is why it is important to stay adequately hydrated to keep up good fluid balance.

- Drink plenty of fluids before coming in for the treatment.
- You will be given 1 to 2 liters of fluids intravenously during your treatment.
- You will receive anti-nausea medication to manage nausea. You will also receive a prescription for anti-nausea medication to take at home.

The most common side effects of chemoradiotherapy

Radiotherapy and chemotherapy cause decline in blood count.

- Decreased number of white blood cells (leukocytes and neutrophils) increases susceptibility to infections.
- Decreased number of platelets (thrombocytes) increases the risk of bleeding (for example bruises, bleeding gums when brushing your teeth, nosebleeds).
- Decreased number of red blood cells, or hemoglobin (Hb), decreases the delivery of oxygen into different parts of the body and causes fatigue and shortness of breath. We try to keep your Hb at 110 to 120 during the treatment.

Skin and mucosal irritation

Chemoradiotherapy that is targeted at the outer genitalia can cause skin and mucosal tenderness. To prevent this we advise you to avoid wearing tight or abrasive clothing or clothing made of non-breathable material. You can use well absorbing emollient creams, washing with lotion and air baths to take care of your skin. If you have severe symptoms, you can use calming medical poultices and NSAIDs; you will receive more detailed instructions on their use.

Vaginal stenosis

A sexual counsellor works at the department of radiotherapy, and they can give instructions on how to prevent vaginal stenosis, if necessary.

If you **experience side effects or they increase**, tell about them during the chemotherapy or radiotherapy.

More information

Online: "[Tyks Cancer Centre](#)", [Terveyskylä.fi/syöpätaalo](https://terveyskyla.fi/syöpätaalo) (only available in Finnish and Swedish) and [All About Cancer, Cancer Society of Finland](#).