



Challenges Posed by Chemotherapy for Children and their Progress

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DESCRIPTION

Chemotherapy can be used alone or with other treatments, such as surgery or radiation therapy. Chemotherapy can be lifesaving for some types of cancer, especially those that affect children, such as leukemia and lymphoma.

However, chemotherapy also has some drawbacks and challenges. One of them is that it can damage healthy cells along with cancer cells, causing side effects such as hair loss, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, infections and more. These side effects can affect the physical and emotional well-being of children receiving chemotherapy, as well as their families and caregivers.

Therefore, it is important to use children receiving chemotherapy in a way that maximizes its benefits and minimizes its harms. This means choosing the right type and dose of chemotherapy for each child, based on their specific type and stage of cancer, their age and overall health, and their preferences and goals. It also means monitoring the child's response to chemotherapy closely and adjusting the treatment plan as needed.

Some of the ways to use of children receiving chemotherapy effectively are:

Chemotherapy through a catheter or port

A catheter is a thin, flexible tube that is inserted into a vein in the body. A port is a small device that is implanted under the skin near a vein. Both allow the child to receive chemotherapy and other medications without having to insert a needle every time. This can reduce pain and discomfort for the child, as well as lower the risk of infection.

Chemotherapy in cycles

Chemotherapy is usually given in cycles, which are periods of treatment followed by periods of rest. This allows the healthy cells to recover from the damage caused by chemotherapy, while still keeping the cancer cells under control. The length and number of cycles depend on the type and stage of cancer, the type and dose of chemotherapy, and how well the child tolerates it.

Supportive care along with chemotherapy

Supportive care refers to treatments that help prevent or manage the side effects of chemotherapy. For example, anti-nausea drugs can help reduce vomiting; antibiotics can help prevent infections; blood transfusions can help restore blood cell counts; pain relievers can help ease discomfort; nutritional supplements can help maintain weight and strength; psychological counseling can help cope with stress and anxiety; etc.

Involving the child and family in decision-making

Children receiving chemotherapy have different needs and preferences than adults. They may have more fears and questions about their treatment; they may need more emotional support and reassurance; they may have more difficulty understanding or following instructions; they may have more concerns about school, friends, hobbies, etc. Therefore, it is important to involve them in decision-making about their treatment as much as possible, taking into account their age, maturity level, cognitive ability, cultural background, etc. It is also important to involve their parents or guardians, siblings, teachers, friends and other people who care for them.

Providing education and information about chemotherapy

Children receiving chemotherapy need accurate and appropriate information about their treatment: what it is; why they need it; how it works; what to expect; how to prepare; how to cope; etc. This information should be given in a clear and simple way that matches their developmental level and learning style. It should also be repeated often and reinforced with visual aids (such as pictures or videos), written materials (such as books or pamphlets), interactive activities (such as games or quizzes), etc.

Using children receiving chemotherapy in these ways can help improve their outcomes and quality of life during their treatment journey. It can also help reduce stress and anxiety for them and their families.

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