Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

What To Expect During Your Treatment at MSK's Infusion Units

This information explains what to expect during your treatment at any of MSK's infusion units.

MSK's infusion units treat people who are getting chemotherapy (chemo) or biotherapy cancer treatments. They also treat people who need some types of supportive care, such as intravenous (IV) hydration or blood products.

MSK has infusion units in Manhattan, Westchester, New Jersey, and on Long Island.

MSK also has an infusion unit in Brooklyn. Not all treatments are offered in Brooklyn. The process to get ready is not the same as we describe below.

If you have an appointment that's only for hydration, your experience may be different than what we describe below. You may have your hydration appointment outside of the infusion unit.

Getting ready for your infusion visit

Here are few things you can do to get ready for your visit.

What to bring

- Bring any of your home medicines that you will need to take during your visit. They may not be available at the infusion unit. Make sure you take the medicines you were told to take before your visit.
- Bring any medicines you only take as needed. For example, these may be medicines you use to manage pain, nausea (feeling like you're going to

throw up), or anxiety.

- If you have diabetes, bring your diabetes medicines, such as insulin. Also be sure to bring your glucometer (blood glucose meter), if you use one.
- Bring things to help pass the time before and during your treatment. Many people find having a tablet, something to read, or games to play helps pass the time. If you bring an electronic device, don't forget the charger and headphones.
- Bring your everyday useful items, such as your phone, phone charger, or lip balm.
- Some infusion units are in buildings with a café, while others are not. You can bring food to your visit, but we cannot reheat any meals.

What to wear

It's a good idea to dress in layers. Some people feel cold or hot during their treatment. We can give you warm blankets during your treatment.

Arrange for a ride home, if needed

It's best to have a responsible care partner take you home after your treatment. A responsible care partner is someone who can help you get home safely. Make sure to plan this before the day of your treatment.

Some medicines can make you sleepy. Talk with your care team or treating nurse about what to expect.

Arrange for childcare, if needed

Visitors must be 12 years old. For pediatric patients, visitors can be as young as 8 years old. Please visit www.msk.org/visit for the latest policy. Any person that comes to your visit with you is also a visitor.

If you have any problems with childcare, tell your care team before your scheduled treatment visit. They can refer you to a social worker who may be able to help.

What to expect before your treatment

Check-in

A staff member will greet you when you check in. They'll ask you to say and spell your name and state your date of birth to confirm your identity. They'll give you a patient identification (I.D.) wristband. Your name, date of birth, and medical record number will be printed on the wristband.

It's important to always keep your I.D. wristband on during your visits. Many staff members will ask you for your name and date of birth and check your patient I.D. wristband. This helps keep you safe. People with the same or a similar name may be having treatment on the same day.

Lab visit

The staff member at the check-in area will tell you if you have a lab visit before your treatment. You'll have one if you need blood tests before your treatment.

If you have a central line, a nurse will use it to collect your blood samples. Examples of central lines are a peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC), an implanted port (mediport), or a tunneled chest catheter. Central lines are also called CVCs.

If you do not have a central line, the lab staff will use a needle to collect your blood samples. They'll try to collect them from a vein in your hand. It's important to use the veins in your arm for treatment later.

After your lab visit, you'll either have a clinic visit or check-in at the desk where you get treatment.

Clinic visit

You may have a clinic visit to see your care team. During this visit, your care team will ask how you're feeling and get you ready for your treatment. They may check your vital signs. Your vital signs are your temperature, blood pressure, breathing rate, oxygen saturation, and pulse.

Some treatment medicines are prepared (made) based on your height and

weight. Your care team must be very accurate when they measure your height and weight. They'll ask you to take off your shoes, hat, outerwear, wig, and hair accessories. This is the safest way to measure your height and weight. It will make sure your treatment is at a safe dose.

After your clinic visit, check in at the desk where you get treatment.

Waiting to be cleared for treatment

Before the nurse can start your treatment, you must be cleared for treatment. This means your care team must confirm your body is healthy enough to get the treatment. If you had blood tests, they'll make sure your results show it's safe for you to get the treatment.

It often takes about 1 hour to get the results of your blood tests. Sometimes it can take longer. Depending on the results of your blood tests, your treatment will move forward, could be cancelled or rescheduled. Your care team will let you know if this happens.

Treatment verification

While your blood is being tested, our pharmacist and nurses with special training will verify (check) your treatment medicines. The treatment verification confirms all parts of your treatment are correct and safe for you to get. Then, the pharmacy staff will get your treatment medicines ready for you. Some medicines take longer than others to prepare.

Wait times

Wait times will not be the same for everyone. Some treatments are prepared ahead of time. Many cannot be prepared until we have your blood test results and your doctor cleared you for treatment. This is all for your safety.

Talk with your care team about getting your blood tests the day before your clinic visit. Having the blood work resulted the day before can help your treatment be ready sooner. This may reduce the time you wait.

Once your treatment is ready and a nurse is available to treat you, we'll bring you into the infusion unit.

What to expect during your treatment

You will get your treatment based on your appointment time. Even if you get to your visit early, we cannot give you your treatment early.

Your treatment nurse

Nurses with special training will take care of you during your treatment. You may not have the same nurse for each visit. All nurses in the infusion unit are familiar with your treatment and care needs.

Before your treatment starts, your nurse will review your medical record and treatment plan. They will ask about your symptoms and talk with you about the plan. This is a good time to ask questions you may have about your treatment.

Your nurse will also ask about any medicines you took earlier in the day.

Your nurse will wear a gown and gloves when handling and giving you your treatment medicine. They may also wear eye protection. This is for their safety. You and your visitors do not have to wear personal protective equipment.

IV access

Many treatments are intravenous (put into a vein). These are called IV treatments.

You may have a central line (PICC, implanted port, or tunneled chest catheter). If so, your nurse will use it to give you your treatment. They'll access it if it's not already accessed.

If you do not have a central line, your nurse will place an IV into your vein. They'll choose the best place on your arm for your treatment. It can take time to find a safe vein to use.

The infusion unit nurses are experienced in placing IV lines. But sometimes it can be hard to find a safe vein, for many reasons. For example, your treatments can affect your veins and make it harder to place an IV line.

If this happens, a treating nurse may talk with your care team about getting a

central line.

During your treatment

Some treatments can last from a few hours to all day. You may get premedication (premeds) as part of your treatment. If so, your treatment may take a little longer than others. Your care team and treating nurse will talk with you about the length of your treatment.

Some treatments take longer the first time you get them. Your treating nurse may need to closely monitor (watch) you for an adverse (bad) reaction. We do not know who will have a reaction.

If you have a reaction, your nurse will stop your treatment and talk with your doctor. Most of the time you can still get the treatment. But you may have to stay longer than planned on that visit. Your future treatment visits will also be longer so we can keep you safe.

Some medicines can make you sleepy or not feel well soon after you get them. It's best to have a responsible care partner drive you home after your treatment. We recommend you talk with your provider or treating nurse about what to expect.

What to expect after your treatment

For safety, we may need to monitor you after your treatment ends. Your treating nurse will let you know when it is OK to leave the infusion unit.

Sometimes you may need a wheelchair when you leave. You may feel very tired at the end of your treatment. This can be because of medicines that can make you sleepy. It can also be from a long day of appointments. It's important to save your energy for the trip home.

Some of our sites have outpatient pharmacies. Ask your office practice nurse if you should pick up your home medicines here or at your local pharmacy. Your care team can coordinate filling and renewing your home prescriptions.

What to expect at home

If you get IV treatment, a nurse will call you 1 to 3 days after your first treatment to see how you're feeling.

If you have any symptoms or questions, call your care team. Do not wait for the nurse to call you. Do not wait until your next treatment appointment. We want to make sure you are cared for when you are home.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider if you:

- Have a fever of 100.4 °F (38 °C) or higher.
- Have chills or are shaking.
- Have signs of infection, such as:
  - A sore throat.
  - A new cough.
  - A burning feeling when you urinate (pee).
- Redness, swelling, warmth, or pus around your incision (surgical cut) or catheter.
- Have mouth sores or mouth pain that makes it hard to swallow, eat, or drink.
- Have nausea (feeling like you're going to throw up) or vomiting (throwing up) even after taking medicine to help.
- Have diarrhea (loose, watery poop) 4 or more times in 24 hours, even after taking medicine to help.
- Have not had a bowel movement (pooped) or passed gas for more than 3 days.
- Have blood in your urine (pee), bowel movements, vomit (throw up), or when you cough.

If you're worried about symptoms during your cancer treatment, call your MSK

care team. They will tell you if you need to get care right away. Read Care Closer to Home: Chemotherapy: What to Do If You Are Worried About Symptoms to learn more.

If you live outside of New York City, your healthcare provider may tell you to go to your local hospital.

Call 911 if you have severe (very bad) symptoms, such as trouble breathing or chest pain.

Important contacts

You can also visit msk.org/pe to search for educational resources, videos, and online programs.

Primary doctor: _____

Primary office practice nurse: _____

Phone number: _____

About MSK's infusion units

Manhattan infusion sites

David H. Koch Center for Cancer Care at MSK

Hours

Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Address
15th floor (K15)
530 East 74th Street
New York, NY 10021

About this location
The infusion unit is an open concept unit. Check in at the Welcome Desk off the elevators and have a seat in any of the waiting lounges.

Each private room has a TV, reclining chair and a place for guests over the age of 12 to sit.

The unit has a station with water, coffee, and tea. There is a small refrigerator for daily patient use.

There is a gift shop and a retail pharmacy on the first floor of the building. Pharmacy hours are Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.

There is a cafeteria on the 6th floor, open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. You can bring food with you to your appointment. We cannot reheat any meals.

There is an app to order meals from the cafeteria called Nutrislice. You will need to use a credit card.

Rockefeller Outpatient Pavilion at MSK
Hours
Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Address

4th floor
160 East 53rd Street (at the corner of 3rd Avenue)
New York, NY 10022

About this location

Some of your appointments may start in the lab. Others may only be in the infusion unit. Your treatment will be on the 4th floor.

You will be in a private room with a TV and a reclining chair. Some rooms have beds for people who have all-day treatments.

You can bring food with you to your treatment. We cannot reheat any meals.

Evelyn H. Lauder Breast Center at MSK

Hours

Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Address

2nd floor
300 East 66th Street (at the corner of 2nd Avenue)
New York, NY 10065

About this location

Your lab and treatment appointment will only be in the infusion unit.

Each private room has a TV, reclining chair, and extra chairs for your guests.

You can bring food with you to your treatment. We cannot reheat any meals.

Sidney Kimmel Center for Prostate and Urologic Cancers at MSK

Hours

Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Address

1st floor
353 East 68th Street (between 68th and 69th streets)
New York, NY 10065

About this location

Your treatment will be in semiprivate rooms (pods). Each pod has a TV and a chair for your visitor. There are a few private rooms with beds reserved for patients with specific treatments.

The unit has a station with water, coffee, and tea. You can bring food with you to your treatment. We cannot reheat any meals.

Regional infusion sites

MSK Basking Ridge

Hours

Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Address

136 Mountainview Boulevard
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920

About this location

Some of your appointments may start in the lab. Others may only be in the infusion unit. There are semiprivate rooms (pods) for our infusion treatments.

Each pod has a TV and a chair for a visitor.

There is a retail pharmacy at this location.

We have a kiosk with food to buy anytime during your visit and light refreshments in the unit. The kiosk is cashless so you will need to use a credit card or mobile payment. You can bring food with you to your appointment. We cannot reheat any meals.

MSK Bergen

Hours

Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Address

225 Summit Avenue
Montvale, NJ 07645

About this location

Your treatment will be in a private room in the infusion unit. Each room has a TV, reclining chair, and a small couch for guests.

There is a retail pharmacy at this location.

There is a small cafe with a selection of breakfast items, sandwiches, and snacks. The kiosk is cashless so you will need to use a credit card or mobile payment. You can bring food with you to your appointment. We cannot reheat any meals.

MSK Commack Nonna's Garden Foundation Center

Hours

Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Saturday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Address

650 Commack Road
Commack, NY 11725

About this location

Some of your appointments may start in the lab. Others may start in the infusion unit. Your treatment will be in a private room in the infusion unit. Each room has a TV, reclining chair, and chairs for your guests.

There is a retail pharmacy at this location.

There is a small cafe with drinks and food items. The cafe is cashless so you will need to use a credit card or mobile payment. You can bring food with you to your appointment. We cannot reheat any meals.

MSK Monmouth

Hours

Monday through Saturday from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Address

480 Red Hill Road
Middletown Township, NJ 07748

About this location

Your treatment will be in a private room in the infusion unit. Each room has a TV, reclining chair, and a small couch for guests.

There is a retail pharmacy at this location.

There is a small cafe with a selection of breakfast items, sandwiches, and snacks. The cafe is cashless so you will need to use a credit card or mobile payment. You can bring food with you to your appointment. We cannot reheat any meals.

MSK Nassau

Hours

Mondays, Tuesdays, and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Wednesdays and Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Address

1101 Hempstead Turnpike
Uniondale, NY 11553

About this location

Some of your appointments may start in the lab. Others may only be in the infusion unit. Your treatment will be in a private room in the infusion unit. Each room has a TV, reclining chair, and a small couch for guests.

There is a kiosk with food that you can buy any time during your visit. The kiosk is cashless so you will need to use a credit card or mobile payment. There are light refreshments in the unit. You can bring food with you to your

appointment. We cannot reheat any meals.

MSK Westchester

Hours

Monday through Saturday from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Address

500 Westchester Avenue
West Harrison, NY 10604

About this location

Some of your appointments may start in the lab. Others may start in the infusion unit. Your treatment will be in a private room in the infusion unit. Each room has a TV, reclining chair, a TV, and chairs for your guests.

There is a retail pharmacy at this location.

There is a small café with drinks and food items. You can bring food with you to your appointment. We cannot reheat any meals.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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