



He aha kei roto i te hahau? What does chemotherapy involve?

A guide for bowel cancer patients and their whānau.

At a glance...

- Chemotherapy medications either kill cancer cells or stop them from growing.
- Immunotherapy targets specific cancer cells by using parts of our immune system to destroy cancer cells.
- Several chemotherapy drugs for early-stage and metastatic bowel cancer treatment are fully funded in New Zealand.
- For more information on bowel cancer treatment funding, refer to 'Unfunded drugs and clinical trials' on our website under treatment options.

"I found setting little goals for the end of each cycle really helped me get through chemo. Sometimes this was as simple as going away for a night with my family."

BRAD,
BOWEL CANCER SURVIVOR

How does chemotherapy work?

Systemic anticancer therapy is when chemotherapy drugs travel through the bloodstream to reach cells throughout the body and are given by mouth or injection. Regional chemotherapy is when treatment with anticancer drugs is directed to a specific area of the body.

A number of medicines are used in New Zealand to treat both early-stage and metastatic bowel cancer, and many of these are publicly funded by the government funding agency PHARMAC. These include 5-FU, Capecitabine, Irinotecan and Oxaliplatin.



Want to know more?

You'll find more detailed information about chemotherapy on our website:
bowelcancernz.org.nz > About bowel cancer
> Treatment options > Chemotherapy and targeted therapies

What are immune and targeted therapies?

A targeted therapy is a drug aimed at a particular gene or protein change in a cancer. An immune therapy (also known as immunotherapy) is designed to prime the immune system to recognise or kill cancer cells. These therapies can help treat metastatic bowel cancer, and new treatments are being developed, tested, and released every year.

Funding: Immune and targeted treatments are not publicly funded for bowel cancer in New Zealand at the moment. However, they are available through cost-capped drug payment plans with pharmaceutical companies.



Helpful tip

Your oncologist will discuss the most effective treatment plan with you. If you have any concerns, it's okay to ask more questions or seek a second opinion.



NEED SUPPORT?

Contact our bowel cancer support nurse:
Email: here4you@bowelcancernz.org.nz
Phone: 0800 BCNZ NURSE (226 968)

Join our private Facebook group:
bowelcancernz.org.nz > Support > Finding Support

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