



Here are a few tips if starting Oxaliplatin treatment:

1. Don't drive yourself to chemo if you actually want to get home!

I drove myself to my first chemo session thinking I would just stroll out of the ward high fiving everyone as I left and drive myself home, unfortunately, this did not happen! The whole chemotherapy treatment lasts for around 4 hours, after steroids and saline solutions have been administered the dreaded 'red bag' of chemotherapy drugs are hooked up!

About 45 from the end (apart from the excruciating arm pain, which I will come on to) my whole body started cramping up. I soon realised I was in not fit state to drive a car and tried to message my husband to collect me. Unfortunately, I had lost all dexterity in my hands and fingers and began aimlessly punching random words into Whatsapp! He must have been able to decipher this cryptic SOS call and luckily turned up outside the hospital soon after. I then had to be physically carried out by a nurse to my husband's car because I was cramping so badly. I made sure I got a lift the next time round!

2. Heat Pack:

For the first couple of hours, I felt ok, but then it hit me! My arm suddenly felt like someone had walloped it with a sledge hammer, anything touching it was absolute agony! I had heat packs, the lot but it didn't help! I was writhing in my chair, crying with pain. I really hadn't prepared myself for that, I really wish I had taken off all my jewellery beforehand- trying to remove bracelets and watches is not fun when you feel like you've got a broken arm! I knew I couldn't go through that again, so needed to look at alternatives for administering the drugs!

3. Warm drinks:

This is a side effect very difficult to explain, and when it hits, it's terrifying! All of a sudden, my throat felt like it was constricting, and I couldn't breathe. I was in a state of panic but luckily, I was given a warm drink which helped slightly, but this was something I hadn't prepared for. Oxaliplatin basically hates the cold- breathing cold air makes your throat constrict, touching anything cold (fridges/cold water) is painful, drinking anything or eating anything cold feels like your swallowing lumps, basically enjoying any form of refreshing beverage is a massive no go for at least a week after!

4. Comfortable outfit choice:

For some reason I thought wearing skinny jeans and a t-shirt would be the perfect outfit for my first chemo session-I was wrong, very wrong!! As I've mentioned, Oxaliplatin hates the cold, so scarves, jumpers, comfy joggers are a must! Not only did I cramp up so much I had to be carried to the bathroom by 2 nurses, but when I got there, I spent about 10 minutes trying to undue my jeans, when I finally finished on the loo, I then turned on the tap (forgetting it was cold!) threw my hands in the air and smacked my head on the hand rail.