Terms to Better Understand Two Side Effects of Chemotherapy: Nausea and Vomiting

Chemotherapy is a treatment with drugs to destroy cancer cells. It is often used with surgery or radiation to treat cancer when it has spread, when it has recurred, or when there is a strong chance that it could recur.

Side Effects of Chemotherapy: Because cancer cells may grow and divide more rapidly than normal cells, many anticancer drugs are made to kill growing cells. But certain normal, healthy cells also multiply quickly, and chemotherapy can affect these cells, too. This damage to normal cells causes side effects including nausea and vomiting.

Emesis: vomiting.

Emetogenic: that induces vomiting.

Antiemetic: a drug that prevents or relieves nausea and vomiting, common side effects of chemotherapy.

CINV: Chemotherapy-Induced Nausea and Vomiting.

Acute CINV: nausea and vomiting that occur within the first 24 hours or on day 1 after chemotherapy is started.

Delayed CINV: nausea and vomiting that develop from days 2-5 or 25 – 120 hours after chemotherapy is given. It occurs commonly with cisplatin, carboplatin, cyclophosphamide, and doxorubicin. Cisplatin-related vomiting can last up to 5 to 7 days following chemotherapy.

Highly emetogenic chemotherapy:
Highly emetogenic chemotherapy (HEC) causes nausea and vomiting in 90 percent or more of patients who do not receive anti-emetic medications prior to treatment. The chemotherapy drug cisplatin, when administered in high doses ($\geq$ 50 mg/m^2), is an example of highly emetogenic chemotherapy.

Moderately emetogenic chemotherapy:
Moderately emetogenic therapy (MEC) is defined as triggering vomiting in 60 to 90 percent of patients who do not receive anti-emetic medications prior to treatment. The chemotherapy regimen consisting of doxorubicin and cyclophosphamide is an example of moderately emetogenic chemotherapy.