

Can You Get Chemotherapy at Home? A Pilot Study Points to Yes.

Traditional chemotherapy requires hours at an infusion center. A home-based cancer treatment may expand access and boost quality of life.

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In the near future, more people with cancer may receive [chemotherapy](#) in the comfort and convenience of their own [home](#), as new data show that home-based treatment is safe and feasible. In a pilot [study](#) evaluating the Mayo Clinic's Cancer CARE (Connected Access and Remote Expertise) Beyond Walls, referred to as CCBW, researchers at the Mayo Clinic combined virtual care, remote patient monitoring and in-home services to safely administer chemotherapy to patients at home,

"Cancer care has traditionally required patients to spend long hours in infusion centers, often far from home," said Roxana Dronca, MD, director of the Mayo Clinic Comprehensive Cancer Center in [Florida](#) and CCBW. "This model allows us to safely bring high-quality care directly to patients, reducing burden while maintaining the standards patients expect from Mayo Clinic."

Study results were published March 18 in the [New England Journal of Medicine](#).

Chemotherapy [access](#) depends on both the absolute number of care providers in an area and the geographical distribution, according to a [2015 study](#). Regardless of insurance status, people who live closest to care centers, often in urban areas, are more likely to receive chemotherapy than people with greater [travel](#) burdens.

"As patient volumes grow and treatments extend [life expectancy](#), health care systems face increasing strain, which was further exacerbated by the disruptions of the [coronavirus disease 2019](#) pandemic," wrote the study's authors.

Home-based chemotherapy may be the key to expanding access to chemotherapy treatment.

“This approach is about more than convenience,” said Dronca. “It’s about improving quality of life during treatment and expanding access to care for patients who may face barriers to reaching traditional cancer centers.”

For the Mayo Clinic’s pilot study, 10 patients with [breast](#) or metastatic [colorectal cancer](#) received 93 intravenous chemotherapy infusions at home between April 1, 2021, and August 31, 2023. The researchers reported no infusion reactions or catheter-related infections, though they noted some minor complications: two falls (unrelated to chemotherapy) and two cases of hypokalemia (low potassium).

In a survey, most of the patients reported high satisfaction scores, with five of the seven patients who completed a survey recommending at-home treatment. One patient said they would recommend a combination of at-home and traditional chemotherapy, while another recommended traditional treatment.

In August 2023, the Mayo Clinic began enrolling patients in a randomized control trial examining home chemotherapy costs, safety and patient preferences. The ongoing study will build on the findings of the pilot study with the intention of scaling the home-based chemotherapy model across the country as chemotherapy demand rises.