What to Expect from the Different Treatments for Mesothelioma

by NEWLIFEOUTLOOK TEAM

Hope and Healing

Mesothelioma is a rare cancer that invades the tissues covering the organs within the body. Some treatments are available for this aggressive cancer, but for many patients, a cure is not possible. Nevertheless, there are some mesothelioma treatment options available like surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, or clinical trials. Talk with your doctor concerning which option is best for you and the cancer within your body. However, regardless of the treatment option you choose, there will be a long mesothelioma recovery. Now, let's look at some mesothelioma treatment options.

Surgery and Recovery from Surgery

Oftentimes, mesothelioma is diagnosed in its advanced stage, which makes surgery impossible. However, if caught in the early stages, mesothelioma can be treated with surgery. It can help reduce the signs and symptoms of the cancer and in some cases can cure it.

Some of the options include decreasing the fluid buildup in your chest, removing the affected tissue and removing the affected organ altogether. Depending on what stage the mesothelioma is in will help determine what surgical option is best for you.

Recovering from surgery is going to be a process. It first involves a temporary hospital stay to ensure there is no internal bleeding, and your risk of infection following the surgery is lowered.

Additional treatments may be used depending on the extent of the surgery. Some of these are chest drains or the implementation of a chest tube. These procedures will need to be monitored closely following surgery.

Chemotherapy and Recovery

Chemotherapy requires the use of drugs to remove the mesothelioma cancer cells from the body. It can be used to slowly make its way through the body attacking cancer cells that cannot be removed via surgery, but it can also be used during surgery to reduce the chance that the cancer will resurface.

Depending on the type of mesothelioma (pleural, peritoneal or pericardial), different combinations of chemotherapy drugs can be administered in different ways.

For instance, in both pleural and peritoneal cases, a combination of pemetrexed and cisplatin is favored, but the mixture is given intravenously for pleural mesothelioma while it’s often injected directly into the abdomen during or after surgery for peritoneal mesothelioma. In the case of pericardial mesothelioma – the rarest of the three types – the drug gemcitabine is the only effective chemotherapy treatment currently available.

Chemotherapy is a long process, and the recovery can be just as long. Many people lose their hair, suffer fatigue,

undergo nausea and experience pain.

The side effects of chemotherapy can be managed by using various methods. Consult with your doctor to determine the best course of action following chemotherapy mesothelioma recovery treatments.

Radiation Therapy and Recovery

Radiation therapy focuses on high-energy beams to specific parts of your body to attack the cancer cells within the body. It can help reduce the symptoms of mesothelioma.

Radiation is often used in conjunction with another treatment or following surgery to try to ensure that the cancer will not return. Expect to have pain at the site of radiation therapy and it can cause nausea during recovery.

Clinical Trials and Recovery

Because of the aggressive nature of mesothelioma, many people opt to participate in clinical trials, which offer newer and sometimes more effective treatments. However, clinical trials may not help treat mesothelioma at all, so it is a gamble.

Recovery from these types of trials depends on what the trials entail, but most likely it will involve pain and nausea similar to chemotherapy or radiation therapy.

Mesothelioma Treatment Roadmap

Recovering from mesothelioma treatment is a long and arduous process that requires a lot of patience. Not only can the physical part of recovery be painful, but the treatment can also take a psychological and emotional toll as well.

You may experience feelings of depression, anxiety, anger and loss of libido, in addition to your physical pain. It is important to have a support system consisting of family or friends, your doctor, a therapist and a support group.

You need to know that you are not alone because your psychological well-being can aid in your physical healing as well. Mesothelioma recovery works best when done holistically.