



### Diagnosis

### Emotional Impact

### Treatment/Side Effects

### Survivorship

### Patient Stories

#### Who Says There's a Shortage?

The American Cancer Society, which said the following in a press release from May 2023:

*“The shortage of certain cancer drugs has become a serious and life-threatening issue for cancer patients across the country. The shortage could lead to delays in treatment and worse outcomes for a number of cancers including triple-negative breast cancer, ovarian cancer and some leukemia.”*

#### Which Drugs for Treating Cancer are in Short Supply?

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) maintains this list. It includes Cisplatin and Carboplatin – two of the most widely used chemotherapy drugs. The shortage was first reported by the FDA in Feb. 2023.

#### What Caused the Cancer Drug Shortage?

The American Cancer Society has cited these factors: expanded demand, supply chain glitches, and manufacturing slowdowns due, in part, to reduction in drug pricing.

#### Previous Crisis in 2012-2013.

During this period, an important survey was conducted among some 250 American oncologists, asking if they had seen a shortage of chemo-

therapy agents in the course of their practice. Over 80% responded that they were unable to prescribe the preferred chemo agent due to widespread shortages. The survey results were reported in The New England Journal of Medicine, (Dec 2013.)



#### The Challenges of Generics.

Once a cancer drug loses its patent protection, its formula can be adopted by “generic” drug manufacturers, many of which are based offshore. Their margins tend to be razor thin and plant closings are not uncommon. As a consequence, the drug supply chain becomes less reliable.

#### How Long Will the Shortage Last?

One authoritative body (the Society of Gynecological Cancers) said in an official release on 4/21/23 that the shortage of Cisplatin and Carboplatin “will likely last several months and possibly longer.”

**Oncologist Options.** To counter the inadequate supply of chemo drugs, the April release suggested oncologists consider:

- Changing the chemo infusion schedule from the standard - - every 3 weeks - - to once a month.
- Giving chemo drugs only to patients where “prolonged clinical benefit” is evident.

What the release did not say, although it seems obvious, is that the cancer patient be told their cancer center is out of the chemo medicines they need, and they should go elsewhere.

#### Counseling at Fighting Chance.

As a cancer patient, about to begin treatment, imagine being told your chemo treatment will be postponed or your dosage reduced to help the hospital manage its shrinking chemo inventory. You don't need to go through this alone. Call to speak with a Fighting Chance Counselor.

Fighting Chance has offices in  
Sag Harbor and at the  
Phillips Family Cancer Center  
in Southampton.

For more details, or information  
please call 631.725.4646

Visit our website at

[www.fightingchance.org](http://www.fightingchance.org)