

Hyperthermic Intraperitoneal Chemotherapy

Hyperthermic intraperitoneal chemotherapy (HIPEC) is a new treatment modality for ovarian cancer patients that are done after the surgery inside the operation theater. This includes application of chemotherapy inside the patient tummy during surgery.

1. What is HIPEC?

It is a short form for a new technique called “Hyperthermic Intraperitoneal Chemotherapy”. It is indicated in ovarian cancer surgical treatment.

2. How does HIPEC works?

It involves circulation of heated chemotherapy through ovarian cancer patient tummy, where the ovarian cancer cells has spread. Cancer cells inside the abdomen that cannot be seen with the naked eye will be killed by this treatment.

3. What is the procedure for HIPEC surgery?

HIPEC surgery involves two phases.

First phase: Cytoreductive surgery – Cancer surgeon will make vertical incision on the patient tummy (abdomen) to explore and see ovarian cancer spread. After exploration, cancer surgeon will remove all visible ovarian cancer disease.

Second phase: HIPEC procedure: After removing all visible cancer disease from abdomen, surgeon will insert catheter. The catheter are connected to HIPEC machine which heats the chemotherapy drug and pump it to abdomen (tummy) through the catheter. Whole procedure will take around 90 minutes. After that all chemotherapy drug is removed from abdomen.

4. What are the benefits of HIPEC surgery?

HIPEC procedure enhances chemotherapy delivery directly into the abdomen, where conventional method of chemotherapy cannot reach efficiently. This procedure can improve survival and reduce recurrence in advanced stage ovarian cancer.

5. What are the risks of HIPEC surgery? Does health insurance cover it?

There are numerous reports that suggest, HIPEC procedure is not associated with increase in complication during ovarian cancer surgery. In clinical settings with experience, HIPEC has been demonstrated to be a safe and effective procedure. HIPEC procedure is covered by major insurance companies.

6. Am I the candidate for HIPEC surgery?

Many physician and surgeon do not understand cytoreductive surgery and HIPEC procedure. We often see patients who were told there were no options by their physicians. Any ovarian cancer patient with spread confined to the abdomen (tummy) may be candidate for HIPEC procedure.

7. After HIPEC, how does recovery go?

It usually takes patients five to seven days to recover from surgery. We have expectation that all our patients will do routine day to day activities after surgery.

