Chemotherapy is a cancer treatment that uses drugs to stop the growth of cancer cells. The drugs contain powerful chemicals that can kill the cancer cells or stop them from dividing. The benefits of chemotherapy are:

- To cure cancer without any other treatment
- To kill any remaining cancer cells
- To prepare for other treatments
- To relieve symptoms

When a patient undergoes surgery to remove a tumour, there is a risk that cancer cells were undetected at the time of surgery and now break loose and spread. These cancer cells can grow into secondary tumours either near the original tumour site or further away at a distant organ. Chemotherapy can be used to prevent the growth and spread of these cancer cells.
Chemotherapy can either be done on its own, in combination with radiation therapy (chemoradiation) before surgery (neoadjuvant) or after surgery (adjuvant). Patients who receive adjuvant chemotherapy minimize the risk of developing secondary tumours after surgery. Patients can also receive neoadjuvant chemotherapy to help shrink the tumours and make other treatments such as surgery possible.

Micrometastases occurs when a small amount of cancer has spread outside the colon or rectum to other areas in the body. These tiny metastases cannot be removed by surgery and currently no available tests can detect them. Adjuvant chemotherapy is important when trying to kill off these cancer cells still there. This may give the body a cleanse of the micrometastases and prevent recurrences.

Discuss chemotherapy with your doctor to see if it should be recommended to you as well as determining the exact chemotherapy combination, the duration, and the side effects. The common chemotherapy regimens for stage III colorectal cancer include FOLFOX or CAPOX, which includes a combination of medications. The type of chemotherapy drug is based on several factors which include:

- Type of cancer
- Stage of cancer
- Overall health
- Previous cancer treatments

Chemotherapy for colorectal cancer can be given in two ways: systemic chemotherapy or regional chemotherapy.

The FOLFOX Regimen includes 3 medications:
- Folinic acid
- Fluorouracil
- Oxaliplatin

The CAPOX Regimen includes 2 medications:
- Capecitabine
- Oxaliplatin

Sometimes other medications are added to the treatment as well, like Irinotecan, depending on the type of cancer you have. Side effects like nausea and vomiting are less common now than they used to be. Your doctor can add medications to treat or prevent side effects.

Systemic chemotherapy involves the drug being injected into the vein or taken by mouth (pill). The drug will enter your bloodstream and be able to reach almost all areas of the body.
Regional chemotherapy involves the drug being placed into an artery that leads to the area of the body with the cancer. This chemotherapy focuses on the cancer cells in that specific area and can reduce the side effects that would result if the drug went to other areas of the body that did not need treatment.