

Chemo Port Pillow Sewing Instructions and Inserts

What is a port pillow?

Chemo patients Velcro these small rectangular pillows around a car's seatbelt, a purse strap, etc. to cushion and protect the chemo port that is typically implanted on a patient's chest near their shoulder. It makes a big difference, making the patient's car ride home from the first infusion treatment much more comfortable after receiving a port pillow.

It's a pretty simple sewing project. You just need 4 inch by 7 inch pieces of fabric sewn right sides together with a 3 inch long unit of $\frac{5}{8}$ " or $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide Velcro sewn into the long side seams. Then, turn right sides out, stuff with polyfill and sew it shut. It makes good use of stashes of scrap fabric.

Materials:

Two 4" x 7" pieces of washable cotton woven fabrics (Or use a length or width of fabric that will equal 4" x 7" when folded in half. Note that there tends to be a shortage of plain, dark colored (navy, black, brown, tan, green) pillows for patients who would prefer those to the prints and colors that "feminine" patients tend to appreciate.)

3" unit of $\frac{5}{8}$ " or $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide Velcro, aka hook and loop tape, intended for sewing, i.e. **without** adhesive on the back

Polyfill or cut-up scraps of quilt batting, machine washable (enough to stuff the pillow so it still has give & doesn't press on the port too hard)

Small baggie (optional)

Paper to print insert from last page of these instructions (optional)

Use $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance.

1. Cut two 4" x 7" pieces of cotton fabric.
2. Cut a 3" long unit of $\frac{5}{8}$ " or $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide Velcro.
3. Pull the Velcro unit apart, if the hooks and loops are attached to each other.
4. On the "right" side of one of the fabric rectangles, clip or pin the offset Velcro pieces across the middle so that the outer ends of the Velcro pieces align with the outer edges of the long sides of the piece of fabric. (See photo below.)
 - That is, set each piece of the Velcro halfway down the opposite long sides of the fabric with a short edge of each Velcro piece aligned with an outer edge of the piece of fabric.
 - Partially reconnect the pieces of Velcro, offset, to ensure that you have the "hooks" and "loops" facing each other.
 - **Note:** If you choose to use a unit of Velcro longer than 3", make sure not to sew both pieces into both side seams or you won't be able to open and close the Velcro when you're done.



5. Place the 2nd fabric rectangle over this unit with its "right" side facing the other piece's "right" side.
6. Sew $\frac{1}{4}$ " around most of the perimeter of this unit:
 - Backstitch when you begin to ensure the stitching doesn't come out.
 - Remove the clip or pin when you are about to sew over the Velcro.
 - Stop and backstitch when you are almost all the way around the perimeter, at least 1.5" to 2" before you reach your starting point, to secure the stitching at the opening. The opening needs to be large enough to turn the unit "right" sides out.
7. Turn the unit "right" sides out through the opening.
8. Lightly stuff with washable polyfill or cut-up scraps of quilt batting or equivalent stuffing.
 - Do not stuff too full because soft is better on the port. Use enough to stuff the pillow so that it still has give & won't press on the port too hard but has enough stuffing to keep a seatbelt from pressing on the port.
9. Sew the opening shut, either topstitch with a machine or blind stitch by hand.
10. If possible, place the finished port pillow in an individual small baggie to keep it clean. If not, we will.
11. If possible, include a small piece of paper to let the recipient know how to use it. (See photo below right, and last pages are sheets of inserts that you can copy or print and cut.) If not possible, we will add this.



12. Bring your completed port pillows to:
 - a [Crazy Quilters' Quilt Guild](#) meeting on the 1st Tuesday of any month from 6:30-9 pm at Calvary Baptist Church, 4601 Tilghman Street, Allentown, PA
 - or to [Neffs Union United Church of Christ](#), 5550 Route 873, Neffs, PA 18065 during normal business hours.

We'll make sure they get to [The Chemo Bag](#) organization to be included in the Bag of Hope comfort totes that they deliver monthly to infusion centers in the Lehigh Valley and surrounding areas.

THANK YOU FOR HELPING!!!

