

CHEMO QUICK TIPS

- Eat breakfast before coming in for your treatment. Avoid heavy, greasy, or spicy foods the day of your chemo.
- Fluids! Fluids ! Fluids ! Eight 8 ounce glasses of fluid the day of chemo.
- Take regular medication, unless instructed otherwise. Bring pain medications with you.
- Senokot or Miralax for constipation.
- Imodium for diarrhea.
- Peppermint or lemon candy may compensate for taste changes associated with chemo.
- Use a salt and soda mouth rinse after meals and at bedtime. 1-teaspoon salt, 1-tablespoon baking soda, and 1-quart of water.
- Popsicles, ice, and cold fluids help prevent mouth sores.
- You are allowed to bring food and beverages with you during your treatment. Please be courteous to fellow patients and avoid foods with strong odors such as tuna and garlic.
- Make sure you have a reliable thermometer. Call for a temperature greater than 99.5 or teeth chattering chills.
- Office Phone is 937-293-1622

What does your blood count mean?

White blood cells

The role of your white blood cells is to fight infection. If you are actively receiving chemotherapy, you may possibly develop neutropenia (low white blood cell count). The drop in the white blood cell count will usually occur ten days after your chemotherapy treatment.

If you begin to have an infection, the first symptom that you will notice is a fever. If your temperature is 99.5 or higher, please notify your physician immediately. Please do not take Tylenol, ibuprofen, or aspirin first.

Red blood cells

The role of your red blood cells is to carry oxygen to and from each cell in your body. There needs to be a certain amount of oxygen in order for the body's organs to work effectively. If there are not enough red blood cells to carry the oxygen, then the lungs and heart have to work extra hard. This then results in a person feeling tired, short of breath, and/or dizzy. If you begin to experience any of the stated symptoms you may be anemic (low red blood cell count). Let your physician know if you begin to feel the stated symptoms or if symptoms are worse than your normal baseline.

Platelets

The role of your platelets is to clot your blood/stop bleeding. Radiation, certain types of chemotherapy, and some cancers can affect the number of platelets in your body. If your platelet count is low, you will bleed easier and for a longer period of time. A low platelet count is called thrombocytopenia.

Please call your doctor if you have any unusual bleeding. Examples of unusual bleeding are a nose bleeding or a nose bleed that cannot be stopped in ten minutes, blood in your urine or stool, and/or pinpoint red spots (petechiae) on the body.

MOUTH SORES

The aim of chemotherapy is to kill fast-growing cancer cells, however, our bodies have many cells that are also fast growing cells that can be affected. These include those cells lining the mouth, throat, and entire GI tract. These cells are often affected by the chemotherapy and can cause mouth and/or throat sores which make eating and drinking difficult.

SOME WAYS TO PREVENT AND MANAGE A SORE MOUTH

Maintain good oral hygiene. Look inside your mouth every day for signs of irritation or white spots that do not wash off. Also check under the tongue and the sides and top of your mouth.

Use a soft toothbrush to brush your teeth

Avoid commercial mouthwashes that contain alcohol. These will be more irritating than helpful. Instead use a mouth rinse with salt and baking soda:
1 teaspoon of salt + 1 tablespoon of baking soda mixed in 1 quart of water. Use as mouthwash/gargle 4-6 times per day and more often if soreness develops.

If you wear dentures and/or partial, please remove those first before rinsing our mouth

TIPS IF MOUTH SORES APPEAR

Call the office if soreness persists and/or you see actual mouth sores, blisters or white patches. You may need a prescription mouthwash.

A diet high in protein and calories will help your sore mouth or tongue heal faster.

Increase your fluid intake.

Avoid spicy, rough, or irritating food such as toast, dry crackers, and chips.

Avoid very hot or very cold foods or liquids.

Avoid tobacco and alcoholic beverages.

SAFE HANDLING GUIDELINES

Everything we place into our body is excreted in some form. This occurs with chemotherapy as well. Chemotherapy is excreted throughout your system within the first forty-eight (48) hours after each treatment. Chemo comes out through your urine, bowel movements, and emesis/vomit.

There are precautions that we advise you to follow for the first 48 hours AFTER EACH TREATMENT. This is a protection for your family members as well.

Flush the toilet twice after each use. Please put the lid down first and then flush the toilet. It is suggested that males sit down in order to prevent splashing.

If there is an accident (for example, vomiting) and someone else cleans up after you, we suggest that person assisting you to wear gloves and wash their hands afterwards.

If you are sexually active, you or your spouse needs to wear a condom during the first 48 hours.

If clothes and/or sheets get soiled with urine, vomit, or any other body fluid, please launder this load separately. Place items in a pillow case and tie it off to remind you to do these separately.

YOU CAN STILL HUG AND KISS EACH OTHER

DIARRHEA

Diarrhea is defined as an increase in frequency, volume, and consistency of stool. It can be related to a cancer diagnosis, surgery, or a side effect of the chemotherapy drugs. Diarrhea occurs due to injury to the cells of the intestine. Symptoms of diarrhea are an increase in the number of stools per day, abdominal cramping, and/or watery stools. Also, there may be pain, the urge to defecate, or the inability to control the bowels.

Helpful tips to manage diarrhea:

- Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day—at least 3 liters a day. Water, Gatorade, Propel, popsicles, bullion, and gelatin are all good sources.
- Avoid milk and dairy products.
- Eat foods low in fiber. For example: applesauce, white rice, banana, baked potato without skin, plain pasta, white bread, peeled apples, crackers.
- Avoid alcohol and carbonated drinks.
- Avoid foods high in fiber such as raw vegetables, nuts, popcorn, coffee, chocolate, whole grain breads/cereals.
- Avoid fatty, fried, spicy or sweet foods.
- Clean rectal area after each bowel movement with baby wipes. Pat rather than rub.
- Take anti-diarrheal medication such as Imodium AD or as prescribed.

If you continue to have problems, please call the office and ask to speak with your physician and/or nurse.

CONSTIPATION

Constipation is a common side effect in people going through treatment for their cancer. It refers to the passage of a small amount of dry, hard stools with discomfort or difficulty. Other symptoms related to constipation are feeling bloated, abdominal cramping and/or fullness. There are other reasons constipation can occur during cancer treatments. Some include chemotherapy, pain medication, decreased fluid intake, lack of exercise, and low fiber diet.

There are many pain medications that have constipation as a side effect. If you are taking pain medications regularly. Please talk to your doctor about taking stool softeners or a laxative.

Helpful tips in preventing constipation:

- Drink at least 8-10 eight ounce glasses of fluid daily. Water, warm liquids such as coffee or tea, fruit and vegetable juices, and hot lemonade are good to try. Drinking plenty of fluids helps keep your stools soft.
- Exercise every day if this is ok with your physician. Walking or riding an exercise bike for 15-30 minutes a day.
- Eat foods high in fiber. Foods that are rich in fiber are whole grain breads, bran, cereal, fresh and dried fruit, raw vegetables such as broccoli, corn, green beans, peas, and spinach. Popcorn and nuts are also a good source of fiber.
- Eating regularly can be helpful.
- Let the doctor know if you haven't had a bowel movement in 3 days, have severe abdominal pain, nausea and/or vomiting, are unable to pass gas, have blood in the stool, or if there is any change in the color or consistency of stools.