



Oral Care

Good oral care is important during cancer treatment. Chemotherapy can cause sores in the mouth and throat making these tissues dry, irritated and/or bleeding. To avoid irritation, brush your teeth and gums after each meal using a soft toothbrush. Avoid commercial mouthwashes that contain peroxide or alcohol. Choose soft soothing foods, such as ice cream, bananas, mashed potatoes, custards, puddings, etc. Avoid irritating acidic foods such as citrus, tomatoes, spicy or salty foods, and rough, coarse or dry foods.

Emotional Issues

Chemotherapy brings major changes to a person's life. The stress of dealing with your diagnosis, deciding on treatment, and dealing with the treatment process and its side effects is very challenging. In addition, chemotherapy agents themselves can affect your mood. Many people may feel anxious, fearful, angry or depressed at some point during their treatment. You may lose interest in being intimate with your partner. These emotions are normal and understandable.

Seek support and share your feelings with your friends and family, as well as care-givers such as your social worker and patient support groups. If you have questions or worries, talk with members of your health-care team.

Contributing to the Community's Health

Frequently people inquire as to how they may make a contribution to the community's health. We encourage you to consider Glendale Adventist Medical Center's Healthcare Foundation whenever you or your family desire to make a difference in the health of our community. For more information, please call (818) 409-8055.

Physician Referral (818) 409-8100

CANCER SERVICES
CHEMOTHERAPY

HEALTH CONNECTIONS

Managing Chemotherapy Side Effects

at Glendale Adventist
Medical Center



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Managing Chemotherapy Side Effects

Chemotherapy agents are given to kill cancer cells, but can also hurt normal, healthy cells. This may result in side effects that you and your doctor will need to manage. This brochure discusses some common side effects and how to treat them.

Nausea and Vomiting

These side effects may be controlled or at least lessened with anti-nausea medications. Your doctor may prescribe anti-nausea medications to be taken before, during or after your chemotherapy treatment. Other helpful hints include: eat frequent and small meals, eat and drink slowly, avoid fried and fatty foods, drink cool and clear fruit juices, and suck on hard candy or ice cubes. In addition, relaxation techniques may be helpful to reduce anxiety that can cause nausea.

Anemia

Chemotherapy can reduce the bone marrow's ability to make red blood cells, causing anemia. A low red blood cell count will make you feel very weak, and you might feel dizziness, chills or shortness of breath. Be sure to report any of these symptoms to your

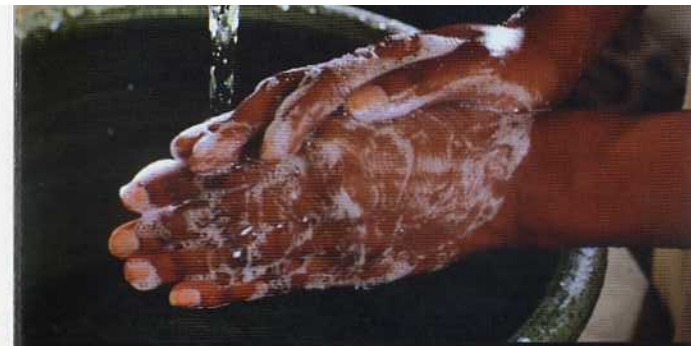
doctor. Your doctor will check your blood cell count often during your treatment. If it falls too low you may need a blood transfusion to replace the red blood cells. You may be prescribed medication to help your bone marrow replenish the cells.

Some things you can do to manage fatigue related to anemia are:

- Take several short rest periods during the day.
- Learn to pace your activities.
- Eat a well-balanced diet.
- Get up slowly from a sitting or lying position to prevent dizziness.

Hair Loss (Alopecia)

Hair loss can be a common side effect of chemotherapy. Your doctor can tell you whether your particular treatment is likely to lead to hair loss. When it does occur, the hair may become thinner or fall out entirely. Hair loss can occur on all parts of the body. It may fall out gradually or in clumps. Your hair should grow back after the treatments are completed. To care for your scalp and hair during chemotherapy: use mild shampoos, soft brushes, and low heat when drying your hair. Do not use brush rollers to set your hair, and do not dye your hair or get a permanent. Make sure to use a sunscreen lotion, wig, hat or scarf to protect your scalp and neck from the sun. For those interested in wigs, some insurance companies may cover the cost when prescribed by your doctor.



Infections

Chemotherapy can make you more likely to get infections. This happens because most anti-cancer medications decrease the bone marrow's ability to produce white blood cells, which fight infections.

Signs of infection are:

- Fever
- Shaking chills
- A sore that is red, swollen or not healing
- New cough or shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- A burning feeling when you urinate

Report any of these symptoms to your doctor before taking any medications. It is very important to try to prevent infections by taking the following steps: wash your hands often, stay away from people with colds and flus, avoid crowds and use an electric shaver instead of a razor. If you do have a very low white count (neutropenia), your doctor may alter your schedule to help your body recover and be strong for your remaining treatments.