

# Fever, infection and side effects while on chemotherapy

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While you are on chemotherapy you are at risk for a serious infection. This is due to a decrease in your white blood cells (neutropenia). You will also have a decrease in your red blood cells and platelets which can cause health problems.

## Take your temperature

**A temperature of 38°C or 100°F or more is a fever and should not be ignored.**

- Take your temperature once a day.
- Take your temperature any time you are not feeling well.
- If you have a fever, call your primary team right away.

## Know the signs of infection which include:

- ✓ a temperature of 38°C or 100°F or more
- ✓ chills/shaking or feeling unwell; with or without a fever
- ✓ a cough with coloured phlegm or sputum
- ✓ red inflamed skin
- ✓ constant diarrhea
- ✓ increased shortness of breath
- ✓ pain or burning with urination
- ✓ sore throat



As instructed by your primary team, if you have any of these signs, call your primary team right away or go to the Emergency Department. **Do not wait.**

If you go to Emergency, tell the staff that you are on chemotherapy.

Do not take Tylenol, Aspirin, Ibuprofen or anti-inflammatory medications. They may cause bleeding and may hide a fever.

## Other possible side effects

- shingles: pain, blisters, a skin rash that may look like chicken pox
- unusual bleeding
- tiredness
- nausea
- constipation
- hair loss
- mood swings, irritability
- difficulty sleeping
- numbness and tingling in your fingers or toes

## What you can do

- Take your anti-nausea medication as directed.
- Use your laxatives as needed.  
**Do not use a suppository or enema.** Eat and drink well (at least 2 to 3 litres of non-caffeinated beverages a day).
- Keep your mouth clean (gentle, soft toothbrush).
- Keep your skin clean (mild soap, warm water, pat dry).

**Please call your primary team if any side effects seem unexpected or extreme.**

## Contact information

Primary Team:

- Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_
- Nurse: \_\_\_\_\_
- Pharmacy: \_\_\_\_\_
- Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
- Fax: \_\_\_\_\_