



What to Expect During Cancer Treatment-Side Effects of Treatment

Finding out you have cancer presents many changes for you and your loved ones. Simply knowing what to expect can help you feel more in control and less worried about what lies ahead. We hope this information will help you and your family as you work through your fears and concerns about cancer and cancer treatment.

What to Expect During Cancer Treatment

- Bothersome side effects from cancer treatment can always be controlled or managed with help from your cancer team. Keep them up to date with how you're doing and whether you need more help.
- You may have many different emotions while going through cancer treatment.
- You may also have concerns about physical changes and side effects.
- Some people have side effects from cancer treatment while others don't have any.
- The severity of side effects from cancer treatment varies by type of treatment and from person to person. Talk with your cancer team about what to expect with your treatment.

Chemotherapy Side Effects

Chemotherapy drugs are very strong. They kill any cell that's growing fast, even if it's not a cancer cell. So, some normal, healthy cells that grow quickly can be harmed. This can cause side effects. Ask your cancer care team what side-effects you may expect from the chemo you will get.

Common chemo side effects are:

- Nausea and vomiting
- Hair loss
- Bone marrow changes
- Mouth and skin changes
- Changes in your sex life
- Fertility problems
- Memory changes
- Emotional changes

Radiation Therapy Side Effects

Some people have no side effects at all, while others do. The most common side effects are:

- Feeling very tired (fatigue)
- Skin changes
- Not wanting to eat (appetite loss)

Other side-effects of Radiation therapy depend on the part of the body being treated. For instance, if you get radiation to your head, you might have hair loss. Or if you get radiation to your chest, you might have a cough or sore throat. Most side effects go away in time. But there are ways to help you feel better. If you have bad side effects, the doctor may stop your treatments for a while, change the schedule, or change the type of treatment you are getting. Tell your doctor, nurse, or radiation therapist about any side-effects you have so they can help you with them.

Surgery Side Effects

Surgery may cause the following:

- Scarring, limitations to movement
- Swelling, pain or fatigue
- Inability to do some activities for some time after surgery

You can get more information about cancer treatment and its side effects by calling 1.800.227.2345 and talking with one of our cancer information specialists. You can also visit cancer.org to get information online.