

Managing Side Effects of Chemotherapy

Side Effect	What You Can Do	Reason to Call Us
Infection	<p>Take your temperature every day</p> <p>Watch for ANY signs/symptoms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • muscle aches • headache • cough • difficulty breathing • pain, burning or blood during urination • urinating more or less often than usual • unusual discharge from your vagina or penis • any areas with pus formation, redness, heat, or swelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your temperature is 100.4°F (38°C) or higher or you have any sign or symptom of infection
Allergic Reaction	<p>Watch for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rash • itching • hives • palpitations • dizziness • swelling or tingling in mouth/throat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any sign of an allergic reaction
Diarrhea	<p>Watch for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bowel movements (BMs) looser or 2-3 times more frequent than normal (for you) • changes in stool color or firmness • increase in your ostomy output 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased stomach cramping • Diarrhea lasting more than 24 hours • Diarrhea that contains blood or that is accompanied by severe cramping or pain

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Constipation	Watch for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bowel movements firmer or harder to pass than normal • feeling bloated or less hungry • increased stomach pain or cramps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If it has been more than 2 days since you normally would have had a bowel movement • If you need a laxative or stool softener to have a bowel movement (and you didn't before treatments began)
Upset Stomach, Vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know that your treatment may change your interest in food and odors may increase nausea • Note the timing of any vomiting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You cannot eat or keep food down for 24 hours • You vomit more than three times in one day • You have projectile vomiting (vomiting with force) • You have difficulty swallowing
Mouth Sores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brush gently • Avoid mouthwash containing alcohol • See your dentist regularly Watch for: redness, tenderness, or swelling of your lips, gums, or tongue • changes in your saliva, or dryness in your mouth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discomfort when you eat or drink • Open sores, blisters cracking, or bleeding on your lips, gums, mouth, or throat
Nervous System Changes	Watch for changes in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vision • hearing • touch • balance • walking • fine motor ability (such as picking up small objects and buttoning clothes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muscle weakness • Numbness or tingling in your arms, legs, hands, or feet • Loss of balance or clumsiness • Confusion • Dizziness • Trouble breathing cold air • Trouble touching cold items

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Hair, Nails, Skin	Watch for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • small red dots on your skin • skin rashes • brittle nails • pale or red skin • itching or peeling skin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skin color changes • Redness, swelling, or soreness on the spot where you receive your medicine
Fluid Imbalance, Edema, Swelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weigh yourself daily • Measure “around” at the same spot on each ankle, wrist, and calf, and around your neck at the start of treatment and regularly after treatment • With your fingers push gently on an area of your skin for 15 seconds and then quickly remove your fingers. Edema will cause the skin to remain dimpled after you’ve removed your fingers. Watch for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shoes feeling tight • can’t remove your rings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight gain of 2-3 pounds a day for two days in a row (weight gain may precede edema that can be seen) • Urinating less than 1 cup per day • If swelling becomes excessive
Bleeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the color of your bowel movements Watch for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • easy or excessive bruising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unusual bruising • Bloody nose • Bleeding in your mouth • Blood in your urine, bowel movement, or vomit (blood in bowel movements or vomit may look black) • Coughing or spitting up blood
Musculoskeletal		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have severe muscle cramps or bone pain
Fatigue, Mood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increased need to rest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find it hard to function because you are so tired

<p>Fatigue, Mood (con't)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You feel exhausted even though you have had enough sleep • Feel so anxious or sad that it is hard to get through the day
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Recognize and Report Your Side Effects Early

- Take control of your life by learning about your condition and understanding your treatment and its possible side effects. Talk openly and honestly with your healthcare team.
- Staying in touch with your body during treatment can help you spot side effects early. Report them right away to your doctors and nurses. Preventing side effects, or treating them early, can help you feel as good as possible during treatment.
- Use a journal or calendar to record the details of your treatment including instructions from your doctor and nurses, how you are feeling, and notes on your progress.

Call Us with Any Questions or Concerns

Roswell Park Locations

- Downtown Hospital 716-845-2300
- Amherst Center 716-845-2900
- Niagara Falls Center 716-845-3500

Roswell Park Community Practices

- Breast Care of WNY 716-332-6834
- Northtowns 716-634-3340
- Southtowns 716-674-3104
- Niagara 716-298-4869
- Jamestown 716-664-1909