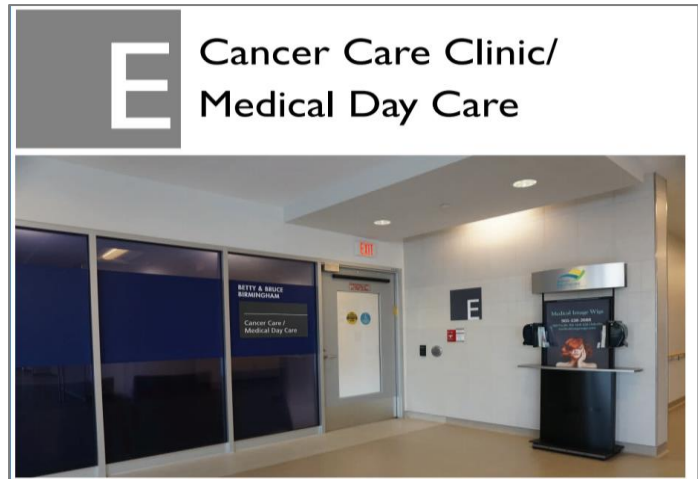




Helping You Prepare for Your Cancer Treatment



As you begin your cancer care treatment and journey, the information below will help you understand:

- What systemic cancer treatment is and how it is given
- Possible side effects of treatment and how to manage them
- When to report side effects you are experiencing
- Other resources to help you cope with changes you may experience

Who to Contact for Help

Monday-Friday, 8:30am-4:00pm	After Hours, Weekends and Statutory Holidays
<p style="text-align: center;">Halton Healthcare Cancer Care Clinic 905-338-4635</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CareChart Digital Health (after-hours symptom management service) 1-877-681-3057</p>
<p>Please leave a message for your clinic nurse and you will receive a call back for assistance.</p>	<p>An operator will answer your call and connect you to a specialized oncology nurse for assistance. Please have your treatment information sheet and medication list on hand when you call.</p>

What is Systemic Cancer Therapy?

Systemic cancer therapy is the treatment of cancer using drugs. There are many different drugs used to treat cancer. They work in different ways and are sometimes called different names.

These drug treatments include:

Chemotherapy: Drugs that destroy cancer cells

Hormone Therapy: Drugs that change levels of hormones to stop or slow down cancer cell growth

Targeted Therapy: Drugs that target specific molecules that stop cancer cells from growing and spreading

Immunotherapy: Drugs that activate your own immune system to find and destroy cancer cells

What are the Goals of Systemic Cancer Therapy?

Your Oncologist has discussed with you why the treatment is needed and the goals of this treatment:

- Sometimes the goal is to eliminate or cure the cancer by killing cancer cells that are present or to prevent the cancer cells from coming back
- When it is not possible to cure the cancer, the goal may be to shrink the amount of cancer cells to:
 - keep it controlled as long as possible
 - prevent it from spreading
 - make it easier to remove the cancer with surgery
- Sometimes, the treatment is also used to control symptoms such as pain

How is Systemic Cancer Therapy Given?

Injection: Into a vein, below the skin, or into a muscle

If you are to receive your treatment using the intravenous or injection methods, you will be given an appointment date and time to come to the clinic for this treatment.

Pills: By mouth

If you are to receive your treatment using pills, you will receive a prescription while you are seeing your Oncologist and you will take these pills on your own at home.

Can I Take Other Medications While I am on Cancer Therapy?

Some medications and natural health products can affect your cancer treatment. Also, some cancer drugs can affect other medications you take. Always make sure your cancer care team is up to date with all medications, vitamins and natural health products you take to ensure there won't be any interactions.

Some people wonder if the treatment is painful.

It does not typically hurt to get drug therapy. If you feel burning or notice redness or swelling in the area of the needle, tell your nurse immediately.

When you are home, if you feel pain or notice redness or swelling in the arm where you received drug therapy, please let us know right away.

Cancer Treatment: Intravenous (IV) Therapy through a Vein

Infusion while at the clinic



Some patients will have an infusion bottle OR pump that goes home with them



Some patients may need to go home with a continuous infusion pump. When this is needed the infusion pump could be a bottle that slowly infuses the medication or a nurse-programmed pump, called a CADD® pump which is programmed to infuse the medication. When the infusion is complete, a nurse from a community agency will disconnect it in your home.

Cancer Treatment: Pills taken by Mouth

Cancer treatment taken by mouth is also called “oral chemo” and can be in the form of pills, tablets or capsules that you take on your own at home. You will be given a prescription and instructions on how to take them.

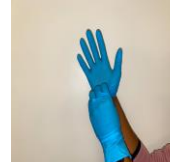
It will tell you:

- ✓ When: The number of times per day to take the medication
- ✓ Amount: The dose and number of pills to take at each time
- ✓ How: If the medication should be taken on an empty or full stomach
- ✓ Safety: How to safely store the medication and other precautions
- ✓ Any other special instructions

If you are prescribed cancer treatment pills, you will be given a booklet of information for you and your caregivers on how to handle the drug safely and how to manage any body fluids while at home. The information can also be found by using the link on our webpage “*How to Safely Handle Cancer Medications and Body Fluids at Home*”

Cancer Treatment Pill Storage and Safety Precautions

Safety Tips



- ✓ Store your medication:
 - In the original packaging provided by your pharmacist
 - In a dry place away from heat and light
 - Out of sight and reach of children and pets
- ✓ These medications should be taken whole. Do not split, crush, cut pills or open capsules.
- ✓ Always wear gloves when touching tablets, capsules or liquids.
- ✓ Wash your hands before putting on your gloves and after taking them off, even if your skin did not touch the oral cancer medications.
- ✓ Throw out your gloves after each use. Do not re-use gloves.
- ✓ Do not touch oral cancer medications at all if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Safe Handling of Body Fluids

What is a body fluid? Body fluids are urine, vomit, stool, blood, phlegm, semen and vaginal fluid.

How long should I follow these tips for? Follow these tips for up to 7 days after each cancer treatment.

- Your treatment nurse will tell you how long you should follow these safety tips if it is different.
- If you take cancer treatment pills you should follow these safety tips as long as the medication is prescribed, plus a minimum of 7 days after your last pill.

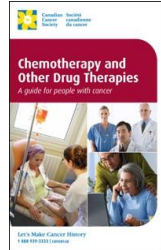
Safety Tips

- ✓ Sit on the toilet when urinating.
- ✓ Flush the toilet once with the lid down and wipe seat and lid afterwards (twice only if poor water pressure and contents do not clear the bowl).
- ✓ Wear gloves if cleaning up or handling **soiled** (has fluids on it) items.
- ✓ Double bag soiled disposable items.
- ✓ Wash any soiled linens in your washing machine with hot water and separate from other laundry.
- ✓ Use condoms and dental dams during sexual activity.
- ✓ If cancer medication gets on your skin, immediately wash the area with soap and water twice.

Safe handling information can also be found by using the link on our webpage “*How to Safely Handle Cancer Medications and Body Fluids at Home*”

What are the Potential Side Effects of my Treatment?

- There are potential side effects for each specific treatment
- You may **NOT** experience **ALL** of these side effects
- Your side effects will depend on the type of treatment you receive, the dose you are given, and how your body reacts



- ❖ Low blood counts
- ❖ Nausea and vomiting
- ❖ Fatigue
- ❖ Hair loss
- ❖ Bowel Changes (diarrhea, constipation)
- ❖ Mouth sores
- ❖ Skin changes
- ❖ Reproductive / hormonal changes
- ❖ Thinking, memory and attention changes
“Brain Fog”

The treatment nurse will discuss the specific side-effects related to the drugs that you will receive. We know some side effects can be prevented. For example, we know some drugs can cause nausea and vomiting so we prescribe anti-nausea medications to prevent it from happening.

Side effects usually go away after you finish your treatment. There are a few that last longer and we will discuss them later. Keep track of any side effects that you may have in a diary, on a calendar, or in a notebook and tell your care team about them.

We are going to go through some of these side effects which are common to many drugs we prescribe.

The booklet by the Canadian Cancer Society titled, “*Chemotherapy and Other Drug Therapies*” is an excellent review of these potential side effects in addition to the information handouts your clinic nurse or treatment nurse are able to give you.

Will I have changes to my hair?

When does it happen? Hair thinning or loss starts about 2 to 3 weeks after your first treatment, but it is temporary. The scalp could feel tender or tingle when the hair starts to fall out.

Most people do not have hair loss on **immunotherapy**, but there may be changes to the colour or texture of the hair. If you plan to buy a wig get a prescription from your cancer care team as the cost may be covered.

Your hair will begin to grow back 3 to 4 weeks after your final treatment. Consider taking part in the Look Good Feel Better programs to help with hair styling and skin care for everyone including teens.

Tips for Managing Hair Loss

- ✓ If you plan to buy a wig, you may want to do so before hair loss occurs to match your natural hair colour and texture
- ✓ Be gentle with your hair. Avoid coloring, perming or straightening your hair during treatment.
- ✓ Protect your head from the sun
- ✓ What's available to you:
 - ✓ Free hand-knitted hats in Chemotherapy Treatment Area
 - ✓ "Where to Start: Wigs" information list available in the clinic
 - ✓ Look Good Feel Better program online or at Wellspring

Will I have nausea or vomiting?

What is nausea? Nausea is an upset or queasy stomach that makes you feel like you may throw up (vomit). Nausea can also cause you to have more saliva (spit) in your mouth, cold and/or damp skin, a fast heartbeat, or feel light-headed.

What is vomiting? Vomiting is “throwing-up” the food and liquid in your stomach through your mouth. Vomiting when there is nothing in your stomach to come up is called dry heaves or retching.

When does it happen? It could occur on the days you receive treatment and for 1-2 days later. Most people do not have nausea or vomiting on **immunotherapy**.

Not all drugs cause nausea and vomiting. If your drug treatment does, your Oncologist will prescribe anti-nausea medications to take before and after the treatment to prevent it. The prescription you will be given is to be filled at your pharmacy and you may need to start them before your treatment is given. Your cancer care team will let you know when you need to take them.

These prescriptions can be expensive. Let your Oncologist or Registered Nurse know if you need help to pay for them.

Tips for Managing

- ✓ Take anti-nausea medication exactly as prescribed. It is easier to prevent nausea with medications than to treat it once it starts.
- ✓ Keep track of when it happens and tell your cancer care team at your next visit
- ✓ Dietary Tips:
 - ✓ Snack on dry foods such as crackers, dry toast or dry cereal
 - ✓ Sip water, juices and other non-fizzy liquids
 - ✓ Let other people do the cooking
 - ✓ Avoid foods that are very sweet, greasy, spicy or have a strong smell
 - ✓ Avoid lying down for at least 30 minutes after eating

Call your cancer care team. Do not wait until your next appointment to report these symptoms:

- ✓ If you are taking your anti-nausea medications AND:
 - You still have nausea or vomiting
 - You are not able to eat or drink

Can medicinal cannabis (marijuana) help with nausea and vomiting?

You may be curious about trying different forms of cannabis to help treat symptoms and side effects. Some forms may help with nausea and vomiting from chemotherapy. Talk to your Cancer Care team about whether cannabis may help your nausea and vomiting.

Low White Blood Cells (Neutropenia)

When does it happen? Low white blood cells may happen 7-14 days after your treatment starts and should return to normal before your next treatment cycle.

What is the concern? White blood cells are your infection fighting blood cells. They are affected by some cancer drugs and may be decreased in the days after your treatment increasing your risk of infection. We sometimes call this NEUTROPENIA.

When white blood cells are low, your body is less able to fight an infection on its own. It is important for you to watch for signs of infection and to have a working, reliable thermometer before you start treatment so you can watch your body temperature.

Tips for Managing

- ✓ Wash your hands often.
- ✓ Avoid touching your face and mucous membranes as much as possible.
- ✓ Try to stay away from people who have colds, flu, or other contagious illnesses (such as: chicken pox, measles, Covid, cold, flu, and shingles) or consider wearing a mask.
- ✓ Clean any cuts right away.
- ✓ Use an electric shaver rather than a disposable razor for shaving.
- ✓ Know the signs of an infection (see next page).
- ✓ Discuss your cancer treatment with your Dentist before having any dental work done.
- ✓ Check with your Oncologist or Pharmacist first but keep your immunizations up to date.
- ✓ Eat a well-balanced diet being sure to wash all fruits and vegetables first. Avoid raw meats, raw fish and raw eggs.
- ✓ Do not clean litter boxes or bird cages. If you must clean up after an animal, use rubber gloves and a mask.
- ✓ Check your temperature with a digital oral thermometer if you feel hot or unwell (for example chills).
- ✓ DO NOT take medications to treat a fever, for example Tylenol or Advil before you take your temperature, as they may hide a fever.

Know the Signs of an Infection

Fever can become a medical emergency if you do not get help for it quickly. It can happen with any chemotherapy drug or immunotherapy drug treatments.

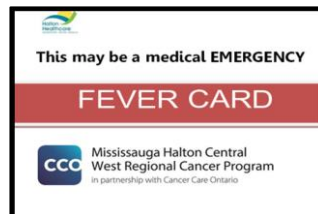
- DO NOT take Tylenol or Advil to bring your fever down and stay do not stay home
- DO NOT drink hot or cold drinks before taking your temperature

Go to your nearest Emergency Department right away if you have a temperature of:

- ✓ 38.3°C (100.9°F) or higher measured once

OR

- ✓ 38°C (100.4°F) measured twice one hour apart



Please bring the Fever Card provided by your care team, even if you feel well. Always keep your immunotherapy card with you if you are on an immunotherapy drug.

DO NOT wait until your next appointment to report these symptoms. Call your Cancer Care Team or the CareChart program after-hours if you are experiencing the following:

- ✓ Flu-like symptoms - body aches, feeling unwell, feeling warm without a fever, chills/shaking or sweating
- ✓ Burning feeling or passing urine more often
- ✓ New cough or cough with yellow/green phlegm with change in your breathing
- ✓ Redness, heat, swelling and fluid coming from a wound

Low Platelet Count (Thrombocytopenia)

When does it happen? It may happen 7-14 days after your treatment cycle starts and should recover before your next treatment cycle.

What is the concern? Platelets help to make clots that stop bleeding. They are affected by some cancer drugs and may be low in the days after your treatment increasing your risk of bleeding. We sometimes call this Thrombocytopenia.

Tips for Managing

- ✓ Use a soft tooth brush and electric razor.
- ✓ Avoid activities that may cause injury.
- ✓ Discuss your cancer treatment with your Dentist before having any dental work done.
- ✓ Use the recommended bowel routine to prevent constipation.
- ✓ Do not take the following without speaking to your cancer care team:
 - Any new medications (including herbal supplements) Aspirin or ibuprofen (like Advil, Motrin).
 - However, if taking Aspirin or blood thinners regularly for other medical problems, do not stop taking it before you have discussed this with your doctor

Go to your nearest Emergency Department right away if you have these symptoms:

- Cuts that won't stop bleeding
- Bleeding from your nose or gums that won't stop
- Blood in your urine or stool or black stools

Call your Cancer Care Team. DO NOT wait until your next appointment to report these symptoms:

- Bleeding from your nose or gums that comes and goes each day
- Bruises that grow, are painful or don't go away
- Little red or purple dots on your skin

Low Red Blood Cells

When does it happen? It may happen a few weeks after your treatment cycle but takes longer than other blood cells to recover.

Red blood cells carry oxygen on a molecule called hemoglobin to all of the body's cells. They may be lowered a few weeks after your treatment and these cells take longer than your white blood cells or platelets to recover. Your energy level will be low and you will feel tired.

Tips for Managing

- ✓ Participate in at least 30 minutes of moderate activity each day
- ✓ Get plenty of rest. Keep activity times short with rest periods in between
- ✓ Avoid heavy or strenuous work
- ✓ Eat a well-balanced diet
- A Blood Transfusion may be required if your red blood cell count is too low

Go to your nearest Emergency Department right away if you have these symptoms:

- Difficulty breathing
- Chest tightness or chest pain

Call your Cancer Care Team. Do not wait until your next appointment to report these symptoms:

- Dizziness
- Headaches or ringing in your ears

Bowel Changes: Diarrhea

Cancer-related diarrhea means that you are having loose, watery or unformed stool (poo) more often than your normal pattern. There are different ways to manage diarrhea based on which systemic therapy drugs you receive.

When does it happen? Diarrhea can happen at anytime

Signs and Symptoms

- ✓ Might look like little flakes or pieces
- ✓ May happen more than 3 or 4 times a day
- ✓ May cause an urgent need to go to the bathroom and you may not be able to stop yourself from having a bowel movement
- ✓ May have cramps, bloating or restlessness
- ✓ Can last for a few hours or become a problem that lasts a long time

Common Causes

- ✓ Some cancer treatment drugs
- ✓ Some medications
- ✓ Some natural health products and vitamins like saw palmetto, ginseng, milk thistle, plantago seed, and aloe may make your diarrhea worse
- ✓ Some foods that upset your stomach
- ✓ Infection
- ✓ Stress or anxiety
- ✓ Other medical problems

What should I do if I have diarrhea?

Sometimes diarrhea can be more serious than you think. If you are on an immunotherapy drug, do not wait until your next appointment to tell your Cancer Care Team about it.

If you have been prescribed anti-diarrhea drugs to treat diarrhea, you should take them as instructed. Your cancer care team's directions might be different from what is written on the box of medicine. Always do what your cancer care team tells you.

Call your Cancer Care Team. DO NOT wait until your next appointment if you have any of these symptoms listed with your diarrhea:

- ✓ Diarrhea and you are on an **immunotherapy** drug
- ✓ Diarrhea that continues for over 24 hours even after you have tried anti-diarrhea medication
- ✓ Blood in your stool
- ✓ You feel tired, weak or dizzy
- ✓ Chest pains
- ✓ Vomiting
- ✓ You have little or very dark pee
- ✓ You are unable to eat or afraid to eat

Tips for Managing

- ✓ Take anti-diarrhea medication **only if** your Cancer Care Team prescribed it
- ✓ Rest and drink lots of fluids
- ✓ Avoid spicy and greasy foods
- ✓ Plan ahead for outings
- ✓ Use tips from the “**How to Manage Your Diarrhea**” patient guide



Bowel Changes: Constipation

Cancer-related constipation means that you are having bowel movements (poo) less often than normal and the stool is often dry and hard to pass. Not everybody has a bowel movement each day. It is normal to have a bowel movement at least every 2-3 days (even when little food is eaten). Know what your normal is.

When does it happen? Constipation can happen at any time.

Signs and Symptoms

- ✓ You have to push hard and strain to get anything to come out
- ✓ You feel the need to have a bowel movement but nothing will come out
- ✓ The stool is small, hard, dry, and looks like pellets
- ✓ Your bowels haven't moved for 3 or more days

Common Causes

- ✓ Some cancer and anti-nausea drugs
- ✓ Most pain medications
- ✓ Reduced fluid intake
- ✓ Reduced fiber intake
- ✓ Lack of exercise
- ✓ Stress or anxiety
- ✓ Other medical problems

What should I do if I have constipation?

Tips for Managing

- ✓ Ask your Cancer Care Team about laxatives and if you need them prevent or treat constipation.
- ✓ Take your laxatives as instructed if they were prescribed.
- ✓ Increase your fluid intake to 8 glasses/day.
- ✓ Increase your fiber intake.
- ✓ Be as physically active as possible.
- ✓ Use tips from the **“How to Manage Your Constipation”** patient guide.



Go to your nearest Emergency Department right away if you have these symptoms:

- ✓ If you have not passed any stool (poo) in more than 3 days and are not passing gas
- ✓ Bright red blood in your stool
- ✓ Very dark or black stool

Call your Cancer Care Team.

Do not wait until your next appointment if you have these symptoms:

- ✓ If you have not passed any stool (poo) in more than 3 days
- ✓ Bloating or pain in your stomach
- ✓ Accompanying nausea and vomiting

Will I have skin changes?

When does it happen? It may happen at any time while on treatment and can last for many months

Signs and Symptoms

- ✓ Skin may become red, dry, itchy or flaky
- ✓ Skin may develop a rash that is red or acne-like
- ✓ Finger and toe nails may become darker, yellow, brittle or cracked

- ✓ If on **immunotherapy**:
 - you may develop vitiligo or changes to the colour or texture of your skin or hair
 - you may develop a rash
 - your skin may be dry, itchy, and uncomfortable

Tips for Managing

- ✓ Use medications prescribed by your cancer care team to manage skin changes
- ✓ Bathe with warm water (not hot water)
- ✓ Use gentle soaps
- ✓ Keep your skin moisturized with lotions made for sensitive skin
- ✓ Keep nails clean and cut short
- ✓ Wear gloves when you wash dishes or work in the garden
- ✓ Stay out of direct sunlight and use sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or greater

DO NOT WAIT. Call your Cancer Care Team if you develop blisters, peeling, numbness, burning or pain

What if I am having trouble breathing?

Breathing problems from **immunotherapy** treatment may be due to swelling and irritation of the lungs (pneumonitis) and are less common than the other side effects.

When does it happen? It may happen at any time with **immunotherapy**, but most commonly can occur about 2 months after treatment starts and can be very serious

Signs and Symptoms

- ✓ Trouble breathing or catching your breath
- ✓ New or worsening cough
- ✓ Could also include wheezing, fatigue, or chest pain

Go to your nearest Emergency Department right away with your immunotherapy card if you have these symptoms:

- Shortness of breath making it hard to even talk
- Chest pain or chest heaviness

Call your Cancer Care Team. Do not wait until your next appointment if you have these symptoms:

- New or worsening cough

What if I am having hormonal side effects?

What hormones can change? Immunotherapy can change how your thyroid, adrenals, or pancreas make some hormones. This side effect is less common than others. Your Oncologist will order blood tests to check your hormone levels regularly.

Many of these symptoms below are very general and may not be related to your immunotherapy, but they could be so it is important we speak to you about them.

When does it happen? It may happen at any time, but most commonly can occur 3 to 6 months after **immunotherapy** starts.

If you have these symptoms call your Cancer Care Team. **DO NOT WAIT** until your next appointment

Common hormonal changes to your thyroid	Hormonal changes to your adrenal and pancreas function
If your thyroid levels are low you may have fatigue, swelling, constipation, hair loss, or weight gain	Hormonal changes can include low adrenal function or getting diabetes
If your thyroid levels are high you may have jitteriness, tremors, racing heartbeat, or weight loss	Symptoms you may have include low blood pressure, fatigue, swelling, more thirst and peeing more often (high blood sugar)

How will I know if I am having liver changes?

When does it happen? It may happen at any time, but most commonly may happen 3 to 6 months after **Immunotherapy** starts.

- Inflammation or irritation of the liver is usually noticed on blood work by your Oncologist
- It often means that immunotherapy has to be stopped for a short period of time, or completely depending on how severe it is
- Steroid pills are often given to help treat swelling of the liver
- Signs of more severe liver irritation include: bloated belly, dark urine, yellow eyes or skin, fatigue, nausea, vomiting

If you have these more severe signs of liver irritation:

- ✓ Call your Cancer Care Team. **DO NOT** wait until your next appointment

Fatigue (Tiredness)

Cancer-related fatigue is feeling tired or having a lack of energy that does not go away with sleep or rest. It is not just related to low red blood cells - almost everyone experiences this!

When does it happen? Anytime and may last for many weeks to months after treatment ends.



Tips for Managing

- ✓ Improve your sleep
- ✓ Pace yourself, do not rush.
- ✓ Put off less important activities.
- ✓ Listen to your body. Rest when you need to.
- ✓ Use tips from **“How to manage your Fatigue”** patient guide
- ✓ Take care of your body:
 - Eat well and stay hydrated
 - Exercise or be physically active. Aim for 30 minutes of moderate exercise on most days
 - Start slowly and go at your own pace

Memory and Concentration Problems (Chemo Fog)

Memory and concentration problems are also called ‘chemo fog’ or ‘chemo brain’. It is not known how cancer treatment affects the brain to cause these changes but fatigue, not sleeping well, stress, and other medications can contribute.

When does it happen? It may happen at any time while on treatment or after treatment ends and can last for many months

Signs and Symptoms

- ✓ Trouble concentrating or paying attention
- ✓ Difficulty remembering things, such as names, dates, or phone numbers
- ✓ Feeling disoriented or in a "mental fog"
- ✓ Feeling confused, taking longer to understand things
- ✓ Difficulty making decisions
- ✓ Difficulty organizing your thoughts or doing mental tasks, such as finding the right word
- ✓ Problems doing more than one thing at a time

Tips for Managing

- ✓ Keep a checklist of daily reminders. Put it where you can see it often
- ✓ Get ready for the next day by setting out the things you will need the night before
- ✓ Label certain cabinets or drawers where you store things at home
- ✓ Put things, back in the same place every time
- ✓ Ask family or friends to help by: listening, taking notes, and asking questions at appointments

Mouth Problems (Mucositis)

When does it happen? It may happen 7 to 14 days after your cancer treatment each cycle.

What is the concern? May not be able to eat or drink

Some drug treatments can cause mouth problems which can include:

- Dry mouth and lips
- Mouth sores
- Cold sores
- Sticky saliva
- Taste changes
- Trouble or pain with swallowing
- Too much saliva (spit)
- Tooth and gum problems
- A stiff jaw
- Bad breath
- Burning mouth
- Feeling thirsty all the time

Any of these mouth problems can happen on the tongue, gums, the sides of the mouth, lips, and in the throat. Mouth sores or bleeding gums could lead infection, difficulty eating and swallowing if not managed.

Tips for Managing

- ✓ Brush your teeth after eating and before bed. Use a soft toothbrush
- ✓ Moisturize your mouth and lips
- ✓ Rinse your mouth with a homemade mouth rinse 4-5 times a day
 - ~ Use 1 teaspoon baking soda + 1 teaspoon salt in 4 cups of warm water
- ✓ DO NOT use mouthwashes with alcohol
- ✓ If your mouth is sore, eat soft, bland foods like cooked cereals, mashed potatoes, and puddings
- ✓ Use tips from the **“How to Manage Your Mouth Problems”** patient guide
- ✓ **Tell your Cancer Care Team if you have mouth sores or if your mouth hurts a lot**

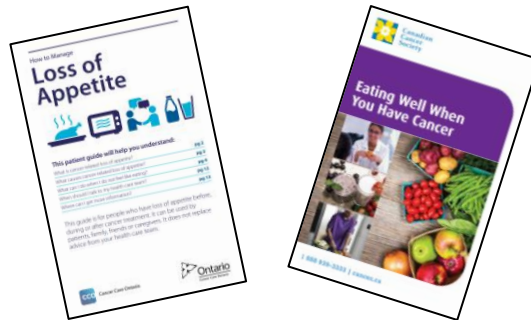


Nutrition during Cancer Treatment

Nutrition is an important part of your cancer treatment. Eating well can help you to:

- Maintain your body weight
- Improve your energy and strength
- Decrease the risk of infection
- Help your body with healing and recovery from cancer treatments

Meeting with a dietician could be the most important thing you could do during treatment!



Meet with a Registered Dietician

Registered Dieticians are available to help you manage symptoms or side effects of your treatment such as:

- ✓ unintentional weight loss
- ✓ loss of appetite
- ✓ trouble swallowing
- ✓ taste changes,
- ✓ sore or dry mouth,
- ✓ nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or constipation

Tips for Managing

- ✓ Choose high energy foods such as full fat dairy products, nuts/seeds, oil/butter/margarine, avocado
- ✓ Choose high protein foods such as meat, chicken, fish, beans/lentils, nuts/seeds
- ✓ Don't limit your diet choices
- ✓ Drink liquids that contain calories - milk, juice, smoothies

What about my sexual health?

It is normal to have a lack of desire or energy for sexual activity during treatment.

Treatment may cause emotional and physical changes and impact hormone levels or reproductive organs. Because of this, treatment may affect your fertility, may cause an early menopause and may change your sexual desires.

Common side effects can include: loss of desire, painful intercourse, and changes in orgasm or erection.

If you have concerns about fertility, plan to have children in the future, or think you might want to, talk to your cancer care team before starting treatment. If you or your partner are able to become pregnant, you must use birth control while receiving treatment and for many weeks afterwards.

Tips for Managing

- ✓ Talk with a nurse, doctor, or social worker about any concerns
- ✓ You and your partner should be open and honest with each other - talk about your feelings and concerns
- ✓ Talk with your partner about ways you want to maintain intimacy such as hand holding, cuddling, kissing and spending time alone together
- ✓ Consider asking for a referral to a Specialist who can assist with sexual health concerns



Taking Care of Your Emotional Health

You may be feeling some or all of these emotions:

- ❖ Anger
- ❖ Anxiety
- ❖ Sadness
- ❖ Fear of uncertainty

These emotions are normal and a natural response to stress

Tips on Managing

- ✓ Find Support:
 - Talk with someone you trust who is a good listener
 - Let your cancer care team know how you are doing
 - Social workers are available to see you and/or your family for psychosocial support
- ✓ Get counselling to help you cope
- ✓ Focus on things that make you feel better (the positive parts of your life or things you can control)
- ✓ Take care of your body:
 - Eat well
 - Exercise
 - Improve your sleep
- ✓ Try relaxation activities
- ✓ Make lists of calming, enjoyable, and useful activities

Community Services and Resources

Wellspring
<https://wellspring.ca/birmingham/>

Canadian Cancer Society
<https://cancer.ca/en/>

Look Good Feel Better Workshops
<https://lgfb.ca/en/>

Cancer Clinic Social Worker
Speak with your Cancer Care Team

