

3 STEPS TOWARD PREVENTING INFECTIONS DURING CHEMOTHERAPY

If you develop a fever during your chemotherapy treatment it is a medical emergency. Fever may be the only sign that you have an infection, and an infection during chemotherapy can be life threatening.

1 Watch Out for Fever

Take your temperature any time you feel warm, flushed, chilled or not well.



If you get a temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, call your doctor immediately, even if it is the middle of the night. DO NOT wait until the office re-opens before you call.

You should also:

- Keep a working thermometer in a convenient location and know how to use it.
- If you have to go to the emergency room, it's important that you tell the person checking you in that you are a cancer patient undergoing chemotherapy and should be seen quickly.
- Keep your doctor's phone numbers with you at all times.

2 Clean Your Hands



Keeping your hands clean is important in preventing infections and don't be afraid to ask people to clean their hands, too.

This should include you, all members of your household, your doctors, nurses and anyone that comes around you. If soap and water are not available, it's o.k. to use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Clean your hands:

- Before, during, and after cooking food
- Before you eat
- After going to the bathroom
- After changing diapers or helping a child to use the bathroom
- After touching trash
- After touching your pet or cleaning up after your pet
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- Before and after treating a cut or wound or caring for your catheter, port or other access device

3 Know the Signs and Symptoms of an Infection



During your chemotherapy treatment, your body will not be able to fight off infections like it used to. Infection during chemotherapy can be very serious.

Call your doctor immediately if you notice any of the following signs and symptoms of an infection:

- Fever (this is sometimes the only sign of an infection)
- Chills and sweats
- Change in cough or new cough
- Sore throat or new mouth sore
- Shortness of breath
- Nasal congestion
- Stiff neck
- Burning or pain with urination
- Unusual vaginal discharge or irritation
- Increased urination
- Redness, soreness, or swelling in any area, including surgical wounds and ports
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Pain in the abdomen or rectum
- New onset of pain
- Changes in skin or mental status

Find out from your doctor when your white blood cell count is likely to be the lowest since this is when you're most at risk for infection (also called nadir).

EMERGENCY NUMBER CARD

1. Treat a temperature of 100.4°F or higher as an emergency, even if it's after hours.
2. Call your doctor immediately if you get a fever:
Doctor's Daytime Phone #: _____
Doctor's After-Hours Phone #: _____
3. If you go to the ER, tell them right away that you have cancer and are undergoing chemotherapy so you can be seen quickly.

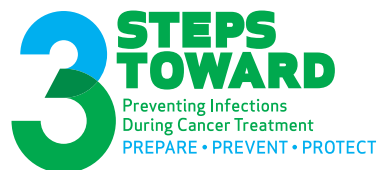
www.PreventCancerInfections.org



Write the number(s) to call in an emergency here:

Doctor's daytime number: _____

Doctor's after-hours number: _____



PreventCancerInfections.org



Cut out the emergency number card. Fill in your doctor's information. Carry this card with you at all times.

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