

ATTENTION EMERGENCY ROOM PERSONNEL:

WHEN CANCER PATIENTS COME TO THE ER ... BE AWARE OF THE DANGER SIGNS

IMAGINE THIS:

8:00 pm

It's 8 p.m. and Ned checks in at the front desk of his local ER complaining of fever and flu-like symptoms.

9:30 pm

Ned is examined by a triage nurse at 9:30 p.m. Ned doesn't mention he has cancer or that he just finished a round of chemo because he's certain he just has the flu.

12:00 am

It's midnight and Ned is seen by a physician. By this time, Ned's temperature has increased, and he is immediately admitted to the hospital for febrile neutropenia.

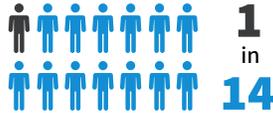
2:30 am



At 2:30 a.m. he is diagnosed with a serious infection that is potentially life-threatening, and will delay his next round of chemo, or worse.

THIS HAPPENS ... A LOT!

- 60,000 cancer patients in the U.S. hospitalized.
- Among those, 1 in 14 will die from this complication.*



WHY DON'T CANCER PATIENTS SPEAK UP?



Cancer patients may be too overwhelmed, embarrassed or simply unaware that their fever could be a sign of something so serious that it could put them at risk for infection, sepsis and even death.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

- A fever may be the only sign of infection and should be treated as a medical emergency.
- Quick action can save a life.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- When you are checking-in patients, ask them if they are undergoing chemotherapy, or if they have had chemotherapy in the last 2 weeks.
- If this question is not currently included in your ER check-in procedures, work with those in charge to include it.

WHAT THIS WILL MEAN

- This could be the difference between them staying on their treatment schedule or being hospitalized – or worse, dying.

Caggiano V, et al. *Cancer*. 2005; 103: 1916-1924.

Preventing Infections in Cancer Patients is a comprehensive initiative led by CDC and the CDC Foundation to reduce infections in cancer patients. For more information on this topic and to learn more about this program, please visit www.PreventCancerInfections.org.

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