

# GETTING CHEMO?

## TOP 5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT NEUTROPENIA

A low white blood cell count, or neutropenia, can put people with cancer at risk for getting an infection.

Neutropenia is one of the most dangerous side effects of chemotherapy.

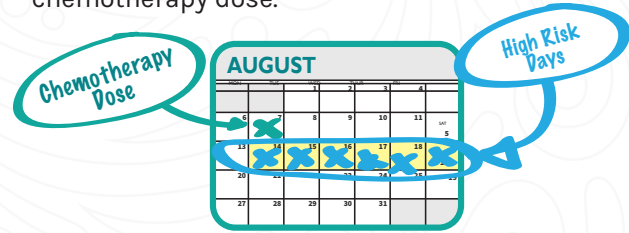
### 1 IT'S LIFE THREATENING

- 60,000 cancer patients in the U.S. are hospitalized each year because of this side effect.
- One in 14 (or 4,100) will die from this complication.\*



### 2 YOU HAVE HIGH RISK DAYS

- You could develop neutropenia 7-12 days after each chemotherapy dose.



### 3 WHY CHEMO CAN PUT YOU AT RISK

- Chemo kills both normal (immune) and abnormal (cancer) cells in your body.
- When this happens, your risk of getting an infection goes up.



### 4 INFECTIONS CAN GET SERIOUS FAST

- Call your doctor immediately if you have a fever.
- If you have to go to the emergency room, tell the person checking you in that you have cancer and are getting chemo.



### 5 YOU CAN HELP PREVENT INFECTION



Wash your hands a lot.



Take a bath or shower every day and use an unscented lotion so your skin won't get dry or cracked.



Talk to your doctor or nurse about when you should get a flu shot.



Ask your doctor or nurse when your white blood cell count will be at its lowest.

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](http://www.PreventCancerInfections.org).

This program was made possible through a CDC Foundation partnership with, and funding from, Amgen. As part of the partnership, the CDC Foundation considered oncology expertise provided by Amgen.



U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention