



Infection may happen after chemotherapy because the drugs that kill cancer cells will also lower your body's level of white blood cells (WBC). WBC's help protect the body by fighting off bacteria that can cause infections. With a low WBC count you may be at risk for infection.

What are the signs of infection?

- » Fever greater than 100.5 F
- » Redness/swelling around skin sores
- » Chills/sweating
- » Cough/sore throat
- » Vaginal discharge/itching
- » Diarrhea
- » Burning when urinating or frequent urination

Infection Prevention Strategies

- » Recognize early signs and symptoms of infection. Have a thermometer available at home so that you can take your temperature if you do not feel well.
- » Know the importance of hand hygiene
- » Make sure you & loved ones are up-to-date with immunizations
- » Avoid food exposure to:
 - raw or undercooked meats/eggs
 - deli meats
 - cured meats in natural wrap
 - unpasteurized dairy products
- » Monitor for fever, persistent cough, and urinary symptoms
- » Call your doctor immediately or go to the emergency room if you have:
 - a fever over 100.5. Do not take any medication unless prescribed by your doctor.
 - a cough or sore throat
 - any wound with swelling, warmth, or increasing redness
- » Wash your hands with hand sanitizers, especially after using the bathroom and before eating.
- » Avoid people who have colds/infections.
- » Ask your doctor or nurse before having any dental cleaning or procedures.
- » Have your blood count test done as ordered, so that your doctor and nurse can watch your WBC count closely.

What can you do to keep healthy skin during treatments?

- » Avoid irritation of your skin and mucous membranes. Keep cuts/scratches clean at all times until healing occurs. Use lotions for dry skin. Do not go barefoot. Wear gloves when working in the garden, doing dishes or when caring for pet litter boxes.
- » Always wear sunscreen with SPF30 when you are exposed to the sun because some chemotherapy drugs will make your skin more sensitive to sun burning. Reapply as necessary.
- » Wear sun protective clothing and avoid direct sunlight between 10 am and 2 pm.
- » Call your doctor if you develop a rash or skin irritation.