

Every person's experience with cancer treatment is different. Knowing what side effects to expect can help caregivers prepare for them. Being informed can help your loved one's health care team manage or prevent some side effects of cancer treatment. This will help your loved one's quality of life during treatment. It can also help complete treatment in a timely manner. It is important to talk about which treatment option will be the have the least side effects.

FATIGUE

Fatigue is one of the most common side effects of cancer treatment. Fatigue can leave your loved one feeling too tired to do the things they need or want to do. This tiredness is generally not related to their physical activity or sleep. It is one of the most frustrating side effects that impact daily activities. Fatigue can gradually increase during treatment and it can last after treatment ends. Some tips to help your loved one manage fatigue are:

- take naps
- ask others for help
- eat well and stay hydrated
- reduce stress
- try to do some physical activity each day

NAUSEA AND VOMITING

Some cancer treatments can cause nausea and vomiting. There are many medications that can help or prevent this. Some medications are given right before or with cancer treatment. Be sure to talk with your loved one's health care team if they are having nausea or vomiting. Some tips to cope with nausea and vomiting are:

- eat small light meals throughout the day
- avoid foods that have a strong smell or are greasy or spicy
- eat foods that are warm or cool rather than hot or cold
- use deep breathing and relaxation methods

CHANGES IN BOWEL HABITS

Your one's normal bowel habits can be impacted by medications, surgery, inactivity, and dietary changes. They may have diarrhea (frequent loose bowel movements) or constipation (feeling like you have to move your bowels but not being able to). For diarrhea, be sure they drink plenty of water and avoid caffeine and very hot or cold drinks. Help your loved one eat several smaller, low fiber meals throughout the day. For constipation, have them drink lots of fluids, try to get some physical activity every day, and talk to their health care team about adding a fiber supplement or other medications to prevent constipation.

INFECTIONS

Infection can be a serious side effect of cancer treatment. Cancer treatment can cause a drop in white blood cells which help your body fight off infection. Some signs of infection include a fever, chills, redness or swelling around a wound or catheter, mouth sores, unusual vaginal discharge, cloudy urine, sore throat, or cough. You can both prevent infection by washing your hands frequently. Avoid large crowds and people who are sick. Contact their health care team immediately if they have a fever or other symptoms.

OTHER SIDE EFFECTS

Less common side effects include mouth sores and dry mouth, changes in taste or smell, changes in skin and nails, bleeding, nerve damage, pain, loss of fertility, sexual problems, hair loss, and problems with memory (chemo brain).

Not everyone will experience treatment side effects. It is important to discuss side effects and any concerns with their health care team. For more information on coping with side effects, visit www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/managing-side-effects.

General Cancer Information, Survivorship & Support

Cancer Support Community • 888-793-9355 • www.CancerSupportCommunity.org

American Cancer Society • 800-227-2345 • www.cancer.org

CancerCare • 800-813-4673 • www.cancercare.org

Cancer.net • 888-651-3038 • www.cancer.net

Caregiver Action Network • 855-227-3640 • www.caregiveraction.org

Healthcare.gov • www.healthcare.gov

Livestrong Foundation • 866-673-7205 • www.livestrong.org

National Cancer Institute • 800-422-6237 • www.cancer.gov

National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine • 888-644-6226 • www.nccam.nih.gov

Patient Advocate Foundation • 800-532-5274 • www.patientadvocate.org

Cancer Support Community Resources

Cancer Support Community's (CSC) resources and programs are available free of charge. Call 888-793-9355 or visit www.CancerSupportCommunity.org for more info.

Cancer Support Helpline® — Have questions, concerns or looking for resources? Call CSC's toll-free Cancer Support Helpline (888-793-9355), available in 200 languages Mon–Fri, 9 am–9 pm ET.

Open to Options® — Preparing for your next appointment? Our trained specialists can help you create a list of questions to share with your doctor. Make an appointment by calling 888-793-9355 or by contacting your local CSC or Gilda's Club.

Frankly Speaking About Cancer® — Trusted information for cancer patients and their loved ones is available through publications, online, and in-person programs. www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/FranklySpeakingAboutCancer.

Services at Local CSCs and Gilda's Clubs — With the help of 170 locations, CSC and Gilda's Club affiliates provide services free of charge to people touched by cancer. Attend support groups, educational sessions, wellness programs, and more at a location near you. www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/FindLocation.

MyLifeLine — CSC's private, online community allows patients and caregivers to easily connect with friends and family to receive social, emotional, and practical support throughout the cancer journey and beyond. Connect with other caregivers by joining the Caregiver Support online discussion board. Sign up at www.MyLifeLine.org.

Grassroots Network — Make sure your voice is heard by federal and state policy makers on issues affecting cancer patients and survivors by joining our Network at www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/become-advocate.

Cancer Experience Registry® — Help others by sharing your cancer patient or cancer caregiver experience via survey at www.CancerExperienceRegistry.org.

The Cancer Support Community provides this information as a service. This publication is not intended to take the place of medical care or the advice of your doctor. We strongly suggest consulting your doctor or other health care professionals to answer questions and learn more.

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