

Manage Your Breast Cancer & Treatment Side Effects

Cancer and cancer treatment can have many different side effects depending on your medical history, type of cancer, and treatment plan. Talk to your doctor or nutritionist on how to best control treatment side effects. Here are some ways to deal with them.



Feeling Weak or Tired

Nearly all cancer patients feel weakness at some point during treatment. Feeling very tired due to cancer treatment is different from normal tiredness because the feeling does not go away with rest. During treatment, make sure to include time to rest throughout the day. If you do not have the energy to do everything you normally do, only do the things that are most important to you.

Diet Changes

Cancer and treatment can make you weak, so some foods may no longer be safe for you to eat. Follow your doctor's guidelines about what foods to avoid and what foods are safe to eat during treatment.

Nausea and Vomiting

These symptoms may start a few hours to a few days after treatment. Your doctor can give you medicine to help with these side effects. They can also be controlled by changing your diet.

Pain

Cancer patients may have pain for different reasons. Talk to your doctor about any pain that you might feel. For example, where is the pain located? How strong is it? Your doctor might be able to give you medicine for the pain.

Swelling

Sometimes fluid builds up in your body—usually the arm or leg—which causes a painful swelling in that area. Your doctor may give you tips and exercises to help prevent swelling.

Hair Loss

Chemotherapy may cause your hair to thin or fall out. This type of hair loss usually lasts only a short time, though sometimes the hair does not grow back the same. Hair loss usually begins 2-3 weeks after treatment starts and lasts until treatment is complete. You may choose to cover your head with a wig, hat, or scarf, or to not to cover it at all.

Diarrhea

Chemotherapy can cause diarrhea. Drink lots of liquids to replace the fluids lost through diarrhea. Try eating smaller meals throughout the day instead of three big meals.

Thinking and Memory Problems

Cancer treatment can sometimes cause patients to forget certain things or not being able to finish a task. These changes can last a short time, or they may go on for longer. Tell your family, friends and doctor about what you are going through and ask for their help. Focus on doing one thing at a time. Keep a daily planner and do mental exercises to help ease these changes.

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