

Managing the SIDE EFFECTS of your treatment



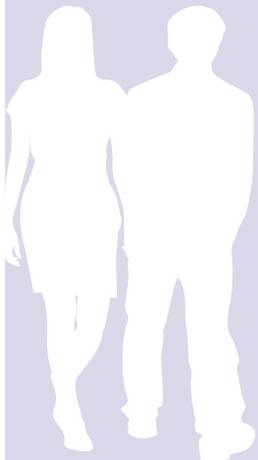
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

You or your loved one has been diagnosed with a type of blood cancer. You may have side effects from the type of therapy you are given. What are some common side effects and how can they be managed?

This fact sheet will help you:

- Get an overview of the therapies you might be given.
- Learn about possible side effects and some treatments for them.
- Understand your role in managing side effects to optimize your health.
- Learn the importance of follow-up care and symptoms to watch for.
- Identify questions to ask your healthcare team.

It's important for you to talk to your healthcare team about any side effects you may have. They can help you manage these as you go through your treatment.



There are many options to help you deal with cancer treatment side effects.

By learning about the side effects, you know what to expect and can learn to better manage them.

Therapies for treating blood cancers

Treatment often includes one or more therapies:

- **Drug therapy** uses drugs or chemicals to kill or damage cancer cells.
- **Radiation therapy** kills cancer cells using high-energy rays.
- **A stem cell transplant** uses your stem cells or a donor's stem cells to help your bone marrow produce healthy blood cells.

These treatments mean that more people with blood cancers are recovering and living longer. Some of the treatments may have side effects, but they aren't necessarily severe. People with cancer are given treatment at doses that balance how effective they are with the risk of long-term side effects.

Common side effects and how to manage them

Talk to your healthcare team about your side effects. The goal is to work with your healthcare team to manage them so you can optimize your quality of life. Here are a few examples of common side effects and treatments:

Cognitive side effects

- You may experience brain fog (chemo brain) from chemotherapy and radiation. This can affect your concentration, memory, and ability to multi-task.
 - Treatment can include therapy to improve your concentration and memory.

Physical side effects

- You may develop anemia from a low red blood cell count. This can cause fatigue, dizziness, and feeling cold.
 - Your doctor may recommend iron supplements or a blood transfusion.
- You may feel fatigued or tired from your treatments.
 - Be sure to exercise, eat well, and manage stress in your daily routine. Even a small amount of exercise every day will benefit you. Ask for psychological support and medical treatment if you need it.
- Your appetite may increase, or you may not feel like eating.
 - You can make changes to your diet (what you eat, how often, and how much) and take nutritional supplements to help. Talk to your healthcare team about options.
- You may experience nausea and vomiting.
 - This is managed with anti-nausea drugs. Acupuncture or therapeutic massage can also be helpful.
- Your skin can become dry, red, and itchy.
 - Moisturizers, lotions, or gels can soothe irritated skin. Talk to your pharmacist about options.
- Your hair may fall out.
 - Wear a wig, scarf, or cap: Remember... it's temporary!

Psychological side effects

- You may experience depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which can happen when you are living with cancer or after cancer treatment.
- There is support available. If you are dealing with depression, anxiety, or PTSD, ask for help as soon as possible.

Managing long-term and late effects

Talk to your friends and family so they understand the challenges you're facing. It's also important to talk to your healthcare team about long-term and late effects.

Long-term effects

Long-term effects of cancer therapy are medical issues that last for months or years after treatment ends. Examples include fatigue and fertility problems.

Late effects

Late effects of cancer therapy are medical issues that don't show up or get noticed until years after treatment ends. Examples include treatment-related cancer and heart disease.

The risk of developing long-term or late effects may be affected by several factors:

- Your type and length of treatment
- Your age at the time of treatment
- Your gender
- Your overall health

For a better quality of life, keep active, eat healthy foods, and use sun protection. Avoid vaping, smoking or using tobacco. Limit your intake of alcohol. Healthcare professionals are available to guide you if you have any questions about how to make healthy choices part of your lifestyle.

Follow-up care

Medical follow-up is important both during and after treatment because:

- It allows the doctor to see how your disease responds to current or past treatments over time.
- It helps your doctor monitor whether the cancer returns.
- It detects long-term or late effects so these can be managed for a better quality of life.

Be sure to:

- **Consult your primary care doctor** for general health and physical exams once a year, or more often if recommended.
- **Consult your oncologist** for regular exams to monitor for relapse or a secondary cancer.

Here are some suggestions to help you prepare for these conversations:

- Keep a record of any physical or emotional symptoms you have – fatigue, weight loss or weight gain, cognitive issues, or depression.
- Keep all your medical records, radiation and imaging results, and a list of cancer treatments, drugs, and supportive therapies. Ask your healthcare team for a summary.
- Keep a list of all the medicines you take and any allergies you have to a medication. Ask your pharmacist for a list.

Follow-up plan

Your oncologist will create a follow-up plan to monitor any late effects that may arise over time to guide your primary care doctor. This coordination between your oncologist and your primary care doctor will help you receive the best possible care.

Questions to ask your clinical trial team

You are getting a lot of new information about your diagnosis. It is very hard to remember everything you're told.

- What to do** Here are some things you should do to feel in control of your treatment and health:
- Make sure you understand your treatment and the possible side effects.
 - Write down all instructions. If you can, bring a family member or friend with you to take notes.
 - Ask for printed information about your treatment and its side effects. If anything is unclear, ask the doctor or nurse to slow down or go over it with you again.

- Questions to ask** Here are some questions you may want to ask:
- What is the dosage or amount of the drug?
 - How do I take the drug?
 - What are the possible side effects?
 - Which side effects are most common?
 - Which side effects should I report right away?

- Before beginning treatment, tell your doctor if you**
- Have been treated with radiation therapy or other cancer therapies.
 - Have any other medical conditions that they aren't aware of.
 - Have recently been exposed to chicken pox or shingles.
 - Have taken this drug before.
 - Had an unusual or allergic reaction to the drug.
 - Have had an unusual or allergic reaction to any foods.
 - Take any other medications or over-the-counter drugs.
 - Use cannabis or street drugs.
 - Take vitamins, minerals, herbs, or other supplements.
 - Are planning to have children or have any concerns about sex, birth control, fertility, pregnancy, or breastfeeding.

Your healthcare team is there to support you throughout your treatment. Be sure to contact them if you have side effects so they can be managed quickly.

This fact sheet was reviewed by:
Jennifer O'Connell, MD CCFP
Crossroads Family Practice

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Never hesitate to contact us, we're here to help!

1 833 222-4884 • info@bloodcancers.ca • bloodcancers.ca