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*The journey towards recovery is a challenging one,
but with the constant love and support
from your friends and family,
you can do it!*

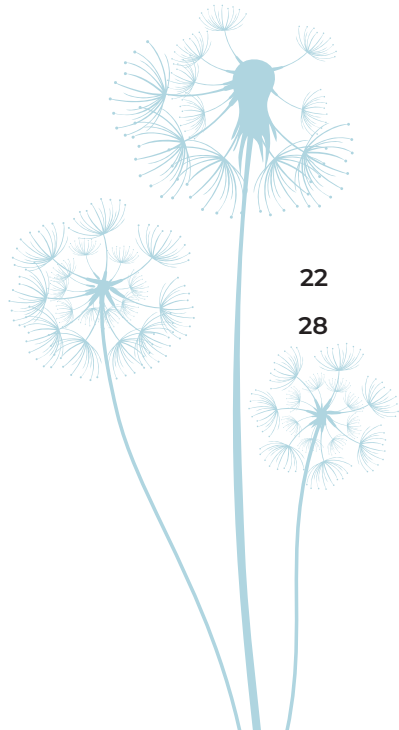


THE
CANCER
CENTRE

CHEMOTHERAPY
Handbook

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Foreword

Dear Reader,

Chemotherapy can be a daunting and unfamiliar journey for many. As the Medical Director and Consultant of The Cancer Centre, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges patients face. It is my belief that education and empowerment are essential elements in ensuring a smoother journey throughout the treatment process. This handbook addresses the most frequently asked questions about chemotherapy, providing clarity and insights into its various aspects.

From treatment planning to the management of side effects, each chapter delves into crucial topics that will aid you in navigating the complexities of chemotherapy. We explore fundamental questions, such as the mechanism of chemotherapy, how it is administered, and what to expect during the treatment. Additionally, we address practical concerns such as driving restrictions, missed doses, interactions with other medications and supplements, as well as home safety after chemotherapy.

I hope this handbook will serve as a trusted companion, providing you with the information and support you need to navigate your chemotherapy journey with confidence and resilience. I encourage you to actively participate in your care, communicate openly with your healthcare team, and utilise the knowledge and resources presented here to optimise your treatment outcomes. Remember, you are not alone in this journey. You possess the power to participate in your healing process actively.

Wishing you strength, resilience, and a successful journey through chemotherapy.

Sincerely,

Dr. Wong Seng Weng
Medical Director & Consultant
The Cancer Centre



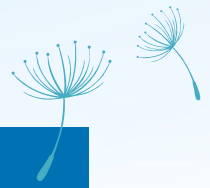
Introduction

The Cancer Centre is committed to providing you and your family quality, ethical and safe care within a welcoming environment supportive of lifestyle, privacy and dignity.

This booklet provides safety information for you to use while you're with The Cancer Centre. This booklet is also a guide for you to better communicate with your healthcare providers about your condition and plan of care at The Cancer Centre. You play an important role in your care as you know best your specific needs. We encourage you to let us know how you would like us to be involved in your cancer journey.

Your role in your care - treatment planning

To facilitate your cancer journey with The Cancer Centre, it is important that you understand your condition and your treatment plan. You and the team in The Cancer Centre will work together to create a plan for your care and how you and your caregiver can better manage at home. This includes your nutrition and medications prescribed for you. Please know that you can ask questions about your treatment plan at any time. Note down all of your questions ahead of your appointments, whenever possible. This will better help you facilitate your discussions with your doctor. During discussions, please share your needs and preferences about your care. If what is being discussed is not clear, please let us know. When patients, families and the healthcare team partner, the best care for you can be achieved.



If you feel unwell, or do not understand how to follow your treatment care plan at home, please contact our hotline where you will always be assisted by our dedicated nurses:

24-hour hotline: +65 6835 1000

For non-emergency matters, you can call during office hours or email us: tcc@smg.sg



Questions & Answers about Chemotherapy

What is chemotherapy?

Chemotherapy is the treatment of cancer using drugs or chemical substances to destroy abnormal or damaged cells in the body.

How does chemotherapy work?

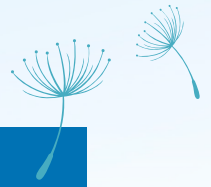
Chemotherapy works by stopping or slowing the growth of cancer cells, which grow and divide quickly. However, it can also harm healthy cells that divide quickly, such as those lining the mouth and intestines or those in the hair roots. Damage to healthy cells may cause side effects. Often, side effects get better or go away after chemotherapy is over.

How is chemotherapy used?

Sometimes, chemotherapy is used as the only cancer treatment. But more often, the doctor may recommend a combination of treatment alongside chemotherapy, such as surgery, radiation therapy, targeted therapy, or immunotherapy. Your doctor will explain which treatments you'll be getting and your treatment goals.

The goals of your drug treatment may be to:

- Cure the cancer – destroy all the cancer and reduce the chances that it will come back.
- Control the cancer – stop it from spreading, slow it down or destroy cancer that has spread to other parts of the body.



- Prevent the growth or spread of cancer.
- Relieve symptoms of cancer and help you feel better if the cancer cannot be cured.

How is chemotherapy administered?

The route of chemotherapy treatment is dependent on the doctor's order. The following are some ways one could receive chemotherapy:

- Via direct injection into a vein with a syringe or through intravenous infusion
- Via direct injection into the muscle, under the skin, and/or into spinal cord
- Via oral in tablet or capsule form
- Via topical application onto the skin
- Via a catheter into the urinary bladder
- Via a catheter implanted on the chest wall (Port-a-Cath)



Questions & Answers about Chemotherapy

What to expect?

You will receive your chemotherapy in the clinic, according to the schedule explained to you by the doctor. Most of the time, you do not need to be hospitalised.

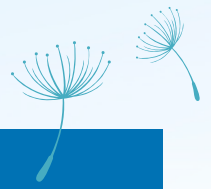
Before each treatment session, you may be required to do blood tests and a physical exam. Sometimes you can have these tests 2 hours before your treatment, or 1-2 days earlier.

Once the tests show that you are fit to proceed with the treatment, your drugs will be prepared. You may also get some medicine before chemotherapy that prevents nausea or allergic reactions – these medications may be required to be taken the day before chemotherapy.

Side effects from chemotherapy can happen any time during, immediately after or a few days or weeks after chemotherapy. Tell your doctor about the side effects you're having. You may need to change the dose or type of chemotherapy that you are taking if your side effects are severe. Your doctor may also prescribe supportive drugs to help manage your side effects when you're at home.

Can I work during chemotherapy?

Many people can work during chemotherapy, as long as they match their schedule to how they feel. Your ability to work may also depend on the type of job you have. If possible, you may consider talking to your employer about working part-time or working from home on



days when you do not feel well. Talk with your employer about ways to adjust your work during chemotherapy.

How long do side effects last?

How long side effects last depends on your health and the kind of chemotherapy you get. Most side effects go away after chemotherapy is over. But sometimes it can take months or even years for them to go away.

Sometimes, chemotherapy can cause long-term side effects that do not go away. Ask your doctor or nurse about your chance of having long-term side effects.

I haven't experienced many side effects from my chemotherapy, so I'm wondering whether my treatment is really working?

Sometimes, people can benefit from chemotherapy without having a lot of side effects or possibly even any side effects.

An important goal is to prevent and manage the side effects. Not having side effects might be due to other factors as well. For example, every drug affects each person differently and at different stages of treatment. Additionally, some chemotherapy drugs are known to cause less severe side effects than others.

Questions & Answers about Chemotherapy

Can I drive?

We suggest that you plan to have a driver or alternative transport for at least your first chemotherapy treatment. As you go through treatment, whether or not you're able to drive will depend on how your body responds to the medication and your general health. Some medications may cause side effects that make it unsafe for you to drive.

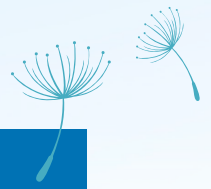
Is there pain in chemotherapy treatment?

There is minimal pain for patients receiving the treatment via direct injection or intravenously.



Do I need to be hospitalised to receive chemotherapy?

In general, most forms of chemotherapy can be administered on an outpatient basis. However, you may require hospitalisation if the doctor sees the need to monitor your progress continuously during the chemotherapy treatment.



How long is the chemotherapy treatment?

The treatment is dependent on the doctor's orders; it could be carried out daily, weekly, fortnightly or monthly. The treatment is often given in cycles, which may include a resting period between each treatment.

The resting period is to allow the body to regenerate new cells to replace the normal cells that were affected by the chemotherapy treatment. For the individual who is receiving chemotherapy via intravenous infusion, the duration could last between 2 and 6 hours, depending on the doctor's order. The doctor will assess the patient's progress closely and determine the duration of the chemotherapy treatment.

What happens if I miss my chemotherapy treatment?

Consult your doctor immediately for the appropriate actions. There may be occasions where your treatment is delayed due to either low blood count or severe side effects. The doctor will adjust your dose accordingly when needed.

Questions & Answers about Chemotherapy

What should I do if I forgot or missed a dose of my oral chemotherapy?

If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you can remember. However, if it's too close to the next dose due, skip the missed dose and go back to the usual dosing time. Call the clinic to check with the nurse if unsure. Do not take extra medication to make up for the missed dose. If you vomit after taking a dose, do not take an additional dose to try and make up for it.

Could I take other medication and vitamin supplements while receiving chemotherapy?

Some of these products can change how chemotherapy works. For this reason, it is important to tell your doctor or nurse about all the vitamins, minerals, dietary supplements, and herbs that you take before you start chemotherapy. During chemotherapy, consult the doctor before you take any of these products.

Must I abstain from alcohol?

Alcohol may interfere with some chemotherapy drugs, thus it is advisable to abstain from it.



Home Safety After Chemotherapy Treatments

Home Safety

After receiving chemotherapy, you and your caregivers need to take special care to prevent contact with your body fluids. These fluids include urine, stools, blood and vomit. Here are some safety measures you should follow:

- Closing the lid and flushing twice after using the toilet.
- Sitting on the toilet to urinate, if you are male, to cut down on splashing.
- Washing your hands with soap and water after using the restroom.
- Cleaning splashes from the toilet with bleach wipes.
- Using gloves when handling body fluids and washing your hands after removing the gloves.
- Wearing disposable pads or diapers if incontinence is an issue and wearing gloves when handling.
- Washing linens soiled with body fluids separately.
- Using condoms during sex.



Side Effects & Management

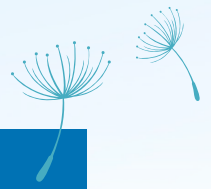


Nausea and vomiting

Nausea and vomiting are common side effects of chemotherapy treatment for cancer. But in most cases, these side effects can be controlled with preventive medications and other measures. Nausea and vomiting can make you feel miserable, add to your fatigue and distress, and make you reluctant to stick to your treatment schedule.

Report to your nurse or doctor right away if:

- You fail to tolerate fluids for more than a day.
- Your urine is dark yellow and you are not going to the bathroom as often as you usually do.
- You feel dizzy or confused.
- The stuff you vomit looks like coffee grounds (this might be blood).
- Your anti-nausea medications are helping but not as much as you would like. You may need a different dose or a different medication.



Here are some ways to help manage nausea and vomiting:

- Eat and drink what works for you.
- Try eating small meals more often instead of three large meals a day. If possible, don't skip meals. Eating a light meal a few hours before treatment also may help.
- Sip fluids slowly and often throughout the day. Fluids include water, juice, soups, broths, sports drinks, herbal tea or nutritional drinks such as Ensure and Prosure.
- Try chewing food slowly and well.
- Eat foods that are lukewarm or cold. The smell of hot foods may make your nausea worse.
- Avoid unpleasant smells. Pay attention to what smells trigger nausea for you and limit your exposure to these smells.
- Do not eat fatty, fried, very spicy, or very sweet foods.
- Rest but don't lie down for at least an hour after eating.



Side Effects & Management

Oral ulcer and throat sore

What is oral mucositis?

Oral mucositis (mew-koh-si-tiss) causes redness, sore spots and ulcerations in your mouth and throat. This can make it hard for you to eat, swallow and talk.

Signs of oral mucositis:

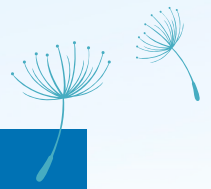
Pain and sores in and around your mouth and throat.

Sometimes the pain and sores are in the intestinal tract. This can cause pain when you swallow, nausea, diarrhoea and sometimes infections.

Management:

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Use a soft toothbrush to clean your teeth.
- Avoid spicy food, very hot or cold drinks.
- Rinse your mouth with Oral7 mouthwash as directed. Use Difflam throat spray when necessary.
- Avoid mouthwash that contains alcohol.

Inform the healthcare team when your mouth has unusual bleeding, pain or sores in your mouth, difficulty in swallowing or eating.



Loss of appetite

Appetite loss or poor appetite are common side effects from cancer and its treatment. This means that you may eat less than usual, not feel hungry at all, or feel full after eating only a small amount.

Ongoing appetite loss may lead to serious complications. These include weight loss, not getting the nutrients that the body needs, and fatigue and weakness from muscle loss. These issues can slow recovery and lead to breaks in treatment.

Management and the appropriate diet

- Eat 5 to 6 small meals a day, and snack whenever you are hungry.
- Eat nutritious snacks that are high in calories and protein. This includes dried fruits, nuts (not raw) and nut butters, yogurt, cheeses, eggs, milkshakes, ice cream, cereal, pudding, and protein bars or granola bars.
- Increase the calories and protein in foods by adding sauces, gravy, butter, cheese, sour cream, whipped cream, and nuts or nut butters.
- Drink fluids between meals, rather than with meals, which may make you feel full too quickly. If you can, drink fluids with additional calories, such as sports drinks with electrolytes.
- Choose nutritious or filling drinks, such as milk or nutritional milkshakes or smoothies.
- Try placing food on smaller plates rather than larger plates.
- If the smell or taste of food makes you nauseous, eat food at room temperature. This will decrease its odour and reduce its taste.
- If you are having trouble tasting food, try adding spices and condiments to make the foods more appealing.

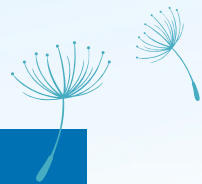
Side Effects & Management

- If you have changes in taste, such as a metallic taste in your mouth, try sucking on hard candy such as mints or lemon drops before eating a meal.
- Use plastic utensils if food tastes like metal.
- Try light exercise, such as a 20-minute walk, about an hour before meals. This may help stimulate your appetite.



Do not:

- Eat raw fish or shellfish, such as sushi and uncooked oysters.
- Use foods, condiments, or drinks that are past their freshness date.
- Eat at buffets, salad bars, or self-service restaurants.
- Eat foods that show signs of mould, including mouldy cheeses.
- Eat any food that is likely to decay or go bad quickly.
- Eat leftovers that have been in the refrigerator
- Leave meat, chicken, turkey, or fish sitting out to thaw.



Diarrhoea

Diarrhoea is when you have more than two loose or watery stools (poops) each day. It is a common side effect of cancer treatments, usually for short periods of time but can also become a long term issue.

If you are having diarrhoea, here are some things you can do:

- If you have to stay in bed, use a bedside commode (portable toilet) when possible.
- Keep a record of your bowel movements (“poops”) and what you eat.
- Keep a list of foods that cause you more problems and try not to eat them.

Food ideas to help with diarrhoea

You may find the following nutrition tips helpful:

- Drink at least 1.5 – 2 litres of fluids every day. This will help keep you hydrated. Examples of fluids are water, juice, liquid nutritional drinks such as Ensure milk, sports drinks, soups or herbal tea. Limit drinks with caffeine and alcohol. These can bother your bowels.
- Eat small, frequent meals and snacks. Try to eat every 2-3 hours.
- Try not to eat too many high-fibre foods such as whole grain breads and cereals with bran, nuts, and seeds. Choose white bread or pasta, white rice, meat, poultry, eggs, and tofu.
- Remove skins, seeds and fibres from fruits and vegetables.

Side Effects & Management

- Try not to eat too much corn, broccoli, beans, green leafy vegetables, prunes, berries, dried fruit, chickpeas and lentils.
- Do not eat spicy, deep-fried, or greasy foods.
- If it makes your diarrhoea worse, do not eat or drink milk and milk products. Lactose-free milk or milk substitutes, such as soy drinks, may be better for you.
- People with severe dehydration may need to get intravenous fluids (fluids given to you by putting a needle attached to a tube into your vein).

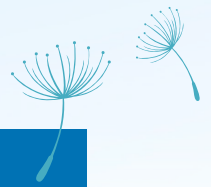
Report to your doctor or nurse if your diarrhoea persists more than 1 day or if you experience severe abdominal cramps or pain.

Constipation

Constipation is when you do not have a bowel movement as often as usual. Your stool is hard or painful to pass. You may have cramps, nausea (feeling queasy), or a feeling of fullness or mild pain in your abdomen (stomach area).

Management:

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Eat regular meals and include fibre in your diet, like whole-grain breads and cereals, dried beans and peas, fresh and dried fruit, nuts and seeds.
- Exercise regularly to improve bowel movement.
- Your doctor may prescribe some anti-constipation medication. Take as directed by your doctor or nurses.



Managing fatigue (Tiredness)

Fatigue, usually described as feeling tired, weak or exhausted affects most people during cancer treatment.

Signs of fatigue:

- You feel weary or exhausted.
- Your body, especially your arms and legs, feel heavy.
- You do not feel like doing normal activities, like eating or shopping.
- You find it hard to concentrate or think clearly.

Here are some ways to help manage fatigue.

- Take short naps or breaks during the day
- Do light activities that you enjoy eg. strolling in the park
- Minimise intake of drinks that contain high levels of caffeine
- Join a support group for mutual support and encouragement



Neutropenia (Low White Blood Cells)

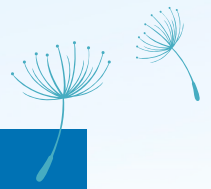
Neutropenia is when you have a low number of neutrophils (a type of white blood cell) in your blood. They are the cells in your body that fight infections or germs. A Full Blood Count (FBC) blood test will show your cell count. When your neutrophils are low, your body cannot fight infection very well and it can make you very sick quickly. They may cause you to miss your next treatment. Sometimes you might need a lower dose of your cancer treatment. You will have your blood taken before the start of each treatment. The doctor will monitor the number of neutrophils that you have in your blood.

Cause of neutropenia

Cancer and cancer treatments can cause neutropenia. Sometimes, when you get a higher dose (amount) of a cancer treatment, you will get neutropenia. If you have other health problems besides cancer, like HIV, you are at a higher risk of getting neutropenia during the treatment.

Tell us if you have any of these symptoms:

- Fever that is more than or equal to **38°C**
- Chills
- Sweating (more than usual)
- Cough or shortness of breath
- Sore throat or sores in your mouth
- Redness or swelling of your skin or around sores on your skin
- Loose bowel movement or liquid stools (diarrhoea)
- Trouble urinating, urinating more than is normal for you, or a burning sensation when you urinate
- Flu-like symptoms such as body aches and extreme tiredness



Prevent infection

- **Hand wash** before eating and after using the bathroom, you can use a hand sanitizer if soap and water is not available. Scrub for a minimum of 15 seconds in total and rinse soap off.
- **Brush your teeth** with a soft toothbrush after eating and before bedtime. If you are having problems with your teeth, check with your doctor first before you see your dentist. Let your dentist know that you are getting cancer treatment.
- **Take a warm shower** every day. Hot showers may dry your skin. Pat your skin dry because rubbing it may also cause dryness.
- **Try to stay away from people who are sick.** Stay away from children and adults who have chicken pox, shingles or the measles.
- **Try not to clean up after pets' waste.** Do not clean fish tanks, and wear gloves while doing planting, to ensure no direct contact with the soil.
- **If you have a central catheter** (PICC, Port, Hickman), be careful to keep it clean and dry. Check the area for redness or soreness daily.

Practice good food safety

- Before preparing your food, wash your hands and all surfaces with warm, soapy water. Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables well before consuming.
- Always cook food to a safe internal temperature. Do not eat undercooked meat, eggs or seafood.
- Separate raw foods away from cooked foods, fruits, and vegetables.
- Thaw frozen foods in the fridge.
- Do not eat deli meats, soft cheese and unpasteurized dairy or juice.

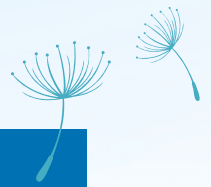
Low Blood Counts

Anaemia (Low red blood cells)

What it is and why it occurs

Red blood cells carry oxygen throughout your body. Anaemia is when you have too few red blood cells to carry the oxygen your body needs. Your heart works harder when your body does not get enough oxygen. This can make it feel like your heart is pounding or beating very fast, feel short of breath, weak, dizzy, faint, or very tired.





Ways to manage

- **Get plenty of rest.** Try to sleep at least 8 hours each night. You might also want to take 1 to 2 short naps (1 hour or less) during the day.
- **Limit your activities.** This means prioritising the activities which are important to you, and limiting those activities which are less important. For example, you might go to work but not clean the house. Or you might order take-out food instead of cooking dinner.
- **Accept help.** When your family or friends offer to help, let them. They can assist with caring for your children, picking up groceries, running errands, driving you to doctor's appointments, or doing other chores that you may feel too tired to handle.
- **Eat a well-balanced diet.** Choose a diet that contains all the calories and protein your body needs. Focus on consuming enough calories to maintain your weight, and consider adding extra protein to help repair tissues that may have been damaged by cancer treatment. Talk to your doctor or nurse. (To learn more, refer to nutrition section).
- **Stand up slowly.** Be cautious when standing up too quickly as you may feel dizzy. When getting up from lying down, take a moment to sit before standing to avoid feeling lightheaded.

Your doctor or nurse will check your blood cell count throughout your chemotherapy. You may need a blood transfusion if your red blood cell count falls too low. Your doctor may also prescribe a medicine to boost (speed up) the growth of red blood cells or suggest that you take iron or other vitamins.

Low Blood Counts

Bleeding (Low Platelet)

What it is and why it occurs

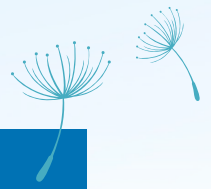
Platelets are cells that make your blood clot when you bleed. Chemotherapy can lower the number of platelets because it affects your bone marrow's ability to make them. This condition may cause; bruises even when you have not been hit or have not bumped into anything, bleeding from your nose or in your mouth, or a rash of tiny red dots.

Ways to manage

Do:

- Brush your teeth with a very soft toothbrush.
- Soften the bristles of your toothbrush by running hot water over them before you brush.
- Use oral 7 mouthwash to maintain oral hygiene.
- Blow your nose gently.
- Be careful when using scissors, knives, or other sharp objects.
- Use an electric shaver instead of a razor.
- Apply gentle but firm pressure to any cuts you get until the bleeding stops.
- Wear shoes all the time, even inside the house or hospital.





Do not:

- Use dental floss or toothpicks.
- Play sports or do other activities during which you could get hurt.
- Wear clothes with tight collars, wrists, or waistbands.
- Strain when you go to the bathroom (refer to constipation).

Some medications may increase your risk of bleeding.

- Do not stop taking any medication that has been prescribed by your doctor.
- Consult the doctor before starting on any new medications or supplements.



Appearance Changes

Hair loss

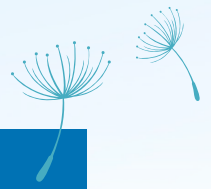
Hair loss affects many people undergoing cancer treatment. It is normal to feel distress about losing your hair. Talk to your doctor about what to expect from your treatment.

Chemotherapy can cause hair loss by damaging hair follicles responsible for hair growth. Not all chemotherapy causes hair loss. Hair loss is almost always temporary. It may begin 1-3 weeks after the first treatment and may begin to grow back 6-8 weeks after the last treatment. Complete regrowth can take months. Some people notice hair regrowth between treatments. Hair that grows back may be of a slightly different colour or texture.



Before treatment starts

- If you have long hair, you may want to cut it short using scissors, avoid using a razor. Short hair tends to look thicker when hair loss occurs, it may be a less dramatic change when the hair falls out.
- You may consider and choose head coverings like hats, scarves, and wigs that are comfortable.
- If you plan to purchase a wig, it is a good idea to select one before hair loss occurs. If you have already lost your hair, take a recent colour photograph with you when selecting a wig. This way you can match your hair colour and style if you wish. Ask your hairdresser if they can style the wig for you.



Here are some places that provide wig services:

Fortune Wigs (<http://www.fortunewigs.com.sg>)

Store Locations: Northpoint City / Bukit Timah / Lucky Plaza / Far East Plaza / Parkway Parade / Tampines 1

Girlhairdo (<http://www.girlhairdo.com>)

Store Location: 170 Orchard Road, Orchard Plaza #02-40 and #02-41 Singapore 238841 (by appointment only)

Hair and scalp care

In most cases, hair loss due to chemotherapy is not preventable regardless of the care taken. The following recommendations may help when caring for your hair and scalp during and after cancer treatment:

- Choose a mild shampoo such as baby shampoo, a soft hairbrush, and set your hair dryer on low heat or let your hair dry naturally.
- Dyeing, perming, curling, or straightening your hair can make it even more dry and brittle. You may want to avoid these during treatment.
- Protect your scalp from the sun when outdoors. Wear a wide-brimmed hat or scarf or use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30.
- Wear a hat or scarf in cold weather to reduce the loss of body heat.
- Use a satin or satin-like pillow case. This will prevent pulling on your hair while you sleep.



Appearance Changes

Skin care

Chemotherapy

Some chemotherapy drugs cause skin changes to your hands and feet. Skin on your palms and soles of your feet can become painful, red, dry, swollen and may blister and peel. You may feel numbness, tingling, burning and pain.

Immunotherapy

Some immunotherapy drugs cause skin rashes. These may vary from a mild rash to a more severe acne-like rash.

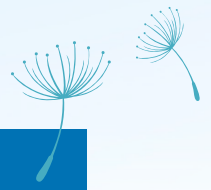
You may get:

- Redness or a warm sensation, like a sunburn.
- Tender pimples and pus.
- Dryness
- Itchiness
- Sensitivity to sunlight.

What can I do?

- Look at your skin daily.
- Wash sweat off your skin.
- Wear gloves if doing manual labour, like gardening or woodworking.
- Wear loose fitting clothes and shoes.
- Protect your skin from sunlight.





- Use warm water, not hot water, on your skin.
- Get gel shoe inserts to cushion your feet.
- Use creams, lotions and ointments that you are instructed to use.
- Change dressing as you are told to.

Nail changes

Cancer treatment can affect the fast-growing cells in your nails, leading to changes in the fingernails or toenails. Many of these changes begin to improve a few weeks after the completion of treatment, but care should be taken during the treatment phase to decrease discomfort and prevent complications.

What you need to look out for

Not all people will experience nail changes, but if you do, they usually occur about 3-6 weeks after starting cancer treatment. Some of them may include:

- Weak, brittle nails that tend to break or crack more easily.
- Nail colour changes: darkening or changes in colour (e.g. to yellow or brown).
- Changes in nail thickness, shape or texture.
- Nail separation from nail bed.
- Line marks, grooves or ridges along the nail.
- Red, painful or frayed surrounding skin.
- Development of ingrown nails.
- Slow nail growth.

Appearance Changes

- Unlike those caused by chemotherapy, nail changes caused by targeted therapies usually come in the form of nail fold infections (paronychia) and red skin growths around the nails that bleed easily (pyogenic granulomas).

How it can be treated

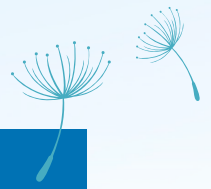
Most nail problems are temporary, and should heal within a few weeks. Marks on nails will grow out in time. Taking care of your nails to prevent complications is the best treatment for nail problems.

The following are some of the do's and don'ts to help you manage nail changes, as well as prevent further complications:

- Keep your nails short and smoothen any jagged edges with a nail file.
- Moisturise your nails and surrounding skin regularly, to prevent dryness.
- Avoid wearing tight-fitting footwear.
- Avoid professional manicures and pedicures due to risk of infection from shared manicure instruments.
- Avoid biting your nails.
- Avoid ripping or peeling off any frayed or loose surrounding skin. Cut it carefully with a clean pair of nail scissors.

Please inform your doctor when you notice any signs of inflammation or infection over your nails:

- Redness and warmth
- Swelling



- Draining fluids or pus
- Worsening pain

Peripheral neuropathy (Nerve damage)

Peripheral neuropathy is nerve damage that affects the long nerves in your body. You may experience a tingling sensation or numbness. It affects your fingers and toes, but can spread upwards to affect the hands, feet, arms, and legs. Peripheral nerves may not be permanent and could take a long time to heal.

When your motor nerves are damaged, you may have problems:

- With balance, tripping, or falling.
- Buttoning your shirt or tying your shoes.
- Picking-up and holding objects.
- Doing tasks that need muscle strength and coordination.

Report to your nurse or doctor right away if your peripheral neuropathy is getting worse or moving to other parts of your body.

Ways to help manage peripheral neuropathy:

Protect your hands and feet

- Wear loose cotton socks.
- Wear protective shoes with good support and cushioning at all times. Good shoes will support your feet and also protect them from injury.

Appearance Changes

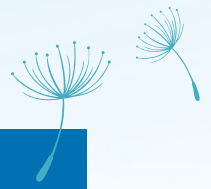
- Your feet may hurt when you walk but you are not harming the nerves or making your neuropathy worse by walking.
- Check your skin daily to look for any cuts or bruises.
- Wear warm gloves, and shoes or boots in cold temperatures.
- Use a potholder or oven mitt when cooking.
- Wear gloves when washing dishes or gardening.
- To ease stiffness, massage your hands and feet.

Stay safe

- Lack of feeling, reduced strength or poor muscle control may make it unsafe for you to do certain things. You may be at risk for falls.
- Keep your home free of clutter.
- Check water temperature with your elbow or an unbreakable thermometer before bathing or doing the dishes.
- Use non-skid strips or mats in your bathtub or shower.
- Take away furniture that has sharp edges or corners. Do not use furniture with wheels.

Exercise and Diet

- Walking and stretching helps keep your muscles flexible.
- Take the vitamins recommended by your doctor.
- Vitamin B might help repair your damaged nerves. Foods with a lot of vitamin B: leafy green vegetables, whole grains, seeds, nuts, meats, fish, poultry, eggs and dairy.



Managing stress and anxiety

Anxiety can be very troublesome during the weeks and months after your cancer diagnosis. It can change how you handle your daily life as well as impact how you react to your cancer care and healing.

Ways to handle stress and anxiety

- Reflect on your thoughts:
 - Keep a diary or record of how and when stress increases and what makes you feel better. Let your cancer care team know if your symptoms are getting worse.
- Learn, plan for and practice daily ways to handle the stress in your life:
 - Good eating habits are required for both physical and mental energy as well as emotional stability.
 - Set up a routine of exercise and sufficient sleep.
 - Listen to calming music, be creative and take part in pleasant distractions.
 - Attend support groups.
 - Manage your time and tasks and accomplish what you can.
 - Make a realistic list of tasks to do. Prioritise and schedule your tasks into your day.



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