

Managing Forgetfulness & Inability to Concentrate



Chemotherapy has been associated with some patients with cognitive deficits – problems with thinking, learning, and memory. This includes forgetfulness and difficulty concentrating.

Research has demonstrated that chemotherapy can have a negative impact on cognitive functioning. How chemotherapy might cause cognitive deficits is not clear at this time.

Your problems with memory and concentration may improve once you complete your chemotherapy, but there is also a possibility that these will be long-term problems.

Other factors that contribute to memory and concentration problems include:

- Aging
- Depression
- Menopause
- Low blood counts
- Medications
- Mental and emotional stress of coping with cancer
- Lack of sleep
- Inadequate nutritional status

Actions to Manage “Chemo-brain”

Problems with memory and concentration can be very frustrating. While there may not be confirmed treatments at this time, there are things you can do to reduce the impact these problems have on your everyday life:

- Minimize distractions when you need to complete tasks that require concentration
- Use a daily organizer to help you remember appointments
- Keep a journal of daily events and activities
- Carry a notebook, and use it to write down important information that you want to remember
- Get plenty of sleep
- Exercise daily
- Manage stress