



# COMMON SIDE EFFECTS WHILE RECEIVING TREATMENT

Side effects often times occur when you are receiving treatment. Listed are some common side effects and steps you can take to feel better. Tell your medical oncology care team of any side affects you may be experiencing.

## CANCER RELATED BRAIN FOG

- Keep a journal or calendar of your appointments & activities and write yourself reminder notes.
- Rest and sleep. Get at least 8 hours of sleep a night.
- Exercise. Move enough to get your heart rate up, take a walk around the block. Try to get at least 20-30 mins of physical activity per day.
- Ask your provider about scheduling an appointment with Occupational Therapy.

## CONSTIPATION

- Drink at least 64 ounces of non-caffeinated beverages a day.
- Increase fiber. High fiber foods include: bran, broccoli, cabbage, berries (raspberries), leafy greens, celery, squash, beans, mushrooms, and oranges.
- If you normally have a bowel movement every day and miss, start taking an over the counter stool softener such as Colace™.
- If you are taking prescription pain medicine, take a stool softener, don't wait until you can't have a bowel movement.
- If you don't have a bowel movement for two days, start taking over the counter Miralax™ per the directions. If this doesn't work after 2-3 doses, please call us, you may need something stronger. (A stool softener is not needed when taking Miralax™. Miralax™ is a combined stool softener and stimulant).



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## DIARRHEA

- Avoid foods that are greasy, spicy, or fried. Milk, dairy products, and high fiber foods such as vegetables can make diarrhea worse.
- The BRAT diet (bananas, rice, applesauce, and toast) can help slow down diarrhea.
- Drink plenty of fluids. At least 64 ounces of non-caffeinated beverages a day.
- Take Imodium, which can be purchased over the counter. Follow the directions on the box, if not effective after 2 days, or if you have more than 8 liquid stools in 24 hours, please call us.

## FATIGUE

- Rest, sleep and exercise. Get up and move enough to get your heart rate up, take a walk around the block- try to get at least 20-30 minutes of physical activity each day.
- Good nutrition and adequate fluid intake help with fatigue as well. Eating a balanced diet with plenty of fruits, vegetables and proteins will give your body the energy it needs.

## FEVER

- It is extremely important that you notify your physician immediately if you develop a fever of 100.4 or higher, have shaking chills or have signs of an infection.



## DEHYDRATION

- Drink fluids. Sip on something all day. Keep drinks close to you if getting up tires you.
- Remember that food contains fluid. Try to eat fruits, vegetables, soups, gelatins, popsicles, and other moist foods.
- Try to get rid of the cause of dehydration (vomiting, diarrhea, fever).
- Please call us if you can't take in or hold down liquids, have vomiting, diarrhea, or fever that last more than 24 hours, your urine is dark, or if you are dizzy, faint or become confused or disoriented. These can be signs of serious dehydration requiring IV hydration.



## MOUTH DISCOMFORT

- Rinse your mouth 3-4 times per day with a baking soda and saltwater solution. Dissolve 1 tsp each of baking soda and salt in 4-6 ounces of water. Gargle/rinse for 30 seconds then spit out.
- Try using Biotene™; an alcohol-free mouth wash and spray.
- Avoid toothpaste and mouthwash that contain alcohol, such as Listerine™. If you do get sores in your mouth and you aren't able to eat or drink well, please call us.



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## NAUSEA AND VOMITING

- Take the medications for nausea and vomiting as prescribed. If the medication we have given you isn't working, please call us. There are other medications that work differently to prevent nausea and vomiting.
- Eat small frequent meals and stick to bland foods. Avoid fried or spicy foods if you have nausea.
- Eat foods that are room temperature or cold, as smells can trigger nausea.
- Have someone else prepare meals if possible.
- Good oral care can help – keep your mouth clean and brush at least twice a day.

## OTHER TIPS

- Bring a list of your medications to every visit to our office.
- Do not start any new medications or supplements without first speaking with your provider.
- For your convenience, contact your pharmacy for all medication refills.
- Notify your provider if you are going to have any dental work done, we may want to check your blood counts first.
- Wash your hands often, use warm water with a good lather for 20 seconds
- Avoid sun exposure, wear SPF of 30 or higher and clothing that covers exposed areas.
- You may find it helpful to journal your experience, websites like **CaringBridge** ([caringbridge.org](http://caringbridge.org)) and **LIVESTRONG** ([livestrong.org](http://livestrong.org)) are also great resources.



## SKIN AND NAIL CHANGES



- Keep your body hydrated by drinking 64 ounces of non-caffeinated beverages a day.
- Use non scented lotions to keep your skin moist to help prevent the skin changes. Using water based moisturizers, lotions or ointments such as Vaseline™, Cetaphil™ or Eucerin™ that don't contain perfumes or dyes are best.
- Shower or bathe using warm water, and avoid using hot water.
- Antihistamines (Benadryl™ or Claritin™) and topical cortisone cream (over the counter) may help relieve itchy skin.
- Keep your nails clean, moisturized and protected. Avoid harsh chemicals and frequent water immersion.

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