

Pain:



- Ask for prescription Medications for pain
- Try acupuncture
- Practice Breathing exercises/meditation
- Join counseling and support groups- pain management techniques
- Apply heat and cold treatment
- You can try gentle massage
- Consult for physical or occupational therapy

Mouth and throat sores:



- Taste on ice chips before and during chemotherapy treatment
- Rinse or gargle with a solution of saltwater and baking soda- avoid mouthwash
- Brush your teeth gently with a toothette - sponge on a stick
- Use your dentures as little as possible and only when needed
- Choose soft foods for easy chewing
- Avoid hot, cold, dry foods, acidic, spicy, salty, and coarse
- Use a straw to drink
- Maintain good oral hygiene
- Ask for prescription Medications for pain

Taste changes:



- Eat foods that you like
- Have a range of foods everyday
- Use spices, sugar, lemon or dressings
- Chilled and cool foods may be more accepted
- Avoid strong odor foods, use exhaust fans
- Chew gums or candy
- Check with your dentist for any oral problems
- Eat or drink something sour
- Use plastic plates if you experience a metallic taste

Diarrhea



- Avoid caffeine, dairy, alcohol, and fatty/oily foods
- Avoid raw vegetables or fruits, spicy foods and fibrous- Whole grains breads, cereals, nuts, and popcorn
- Avoid certain medicines used for constipation like stool softeners laxatives
- Avoid metoclopramide (Reglan) used for nausea and vomiting
- Eat small, frequent meals that are easy to digest E.g. bananas, and rice
- Ask for a low-residue diet (a diet which includes low-fiber)
- Avoid dehydration by drinking water and other clear liquids
- Ask your doctor for altering the chemotherapy schedule for severe diarrhea
- Ask for prescription medications

Constipation:



- Drink adequate water regularly
- Enquire and ask for advice if any medications that are part of your treatment are causing constipation
- Eat more fiber rich foods like fresh fruits, vegetables, whole-grain cereals, peas and popcorn only after consulting with your doctor
- Involve in mild physical activity like walking everyday for 30 minutes
- Consult your doctor for prescription- fiber supplements such as laxatives or stool softeners

Nausea and vomiting:



- Use distraction- music, videos- movies
- Practice relaxation techniques- meditation, breathing
- Try Acupuncture or Positive imagery
- Be in fresh air and wear loose clothing
- Avoid heavy, fatty and greasy meals just before chemotherapy
- Avoid strong odors
- Stop eating if you are vomiting and resume with liquids progressing to soft easily digested food once vomiting subsides
- Avoid caffeine and smoking
- Suck on ice or hard candy during chemotherapy
- Do not eat your favorite food when nauseated
- Take adequate rest after eating
- If you are nauseated during and after chemotherapy do not eat food before 2 hours of the treatment
- Ask for prescription medications for nausea

Hair loss:



- Cut your hair short so that it looks full and that the change will not be drastic during regrowth
- Use a Cold cap- a cap or a head covering with cold packs before, during, or after chemotherapy
- Ask your doctor for topical medication helpful in treating hair thinning
- Use wigs or hairpieces, avoid using wigs during the course of radiation therapy
- Care for your scalp and hair by using gentle shampoos, soft bristled wide-tooth comb
- Avoid blow-drying or excessive rubbing of scalp instead pat dry hair
- Cover your scalp when out in sun or cold
- Avoid, curling or straightening with chemical products and permanent or semi-permanent hair coloring
- Choose a comfortable, soft, covering for bed pillow.
- Consult your doctor before using any hair-growth creams or lotions and for nutritional supplements for hair growth

Appetite loss- weight loss



- Identify and treat the underlying cause like nausea, vomiting or diarrhea that is causing weight loss
- Eat well on the days you feel well
- Eat your favorite foods
- Have five to six meals a day.
- Eat in a pleasant environment when you are relaxed
- Indulge in mild to moderate exercise
- Have diet rich in proteins and calories, but avoid heavy protein rich food before chemotherapy
- Consult your doctor for any supplements

Low blood counts- blood disorders



- “Low blood counts- Blood disorders cause anemia, fatigue, insomnia, bleeding problems and infections”
- Consume foods that are rich in iron and folic acid
 - Ask your doctor for mineral and iron supplements
 - Use prescription medications
 - Seek treatment for any underlying cause like anemia

Nervous & muscle system effects



“Nervous system effects include hearing, vision, taste, sensitivity, memory, balance, and coordination disturbances. Muscular system effects include muscle weakness and pain”

- Use prescription medication for pain, neuropathy
- Try physiotherapy for better coordination
- Make changes at home like easy door handles, nonskid rugs, extra lighting
- Practice Breathing exercises/meditation
- Try physical therapy which improves physical strength, mobility, coordination, and balance,
- Seek speech therapy for speech impairment
- Regularly see your neuropsychologist for evaluation of your cognitive function

Sexual issues



- Indulge in moderate exercise
- Keep your stress levels low
- Try relaxation techniques like deep breathing or meditation
- Stay in a cooler room temperature
- Use prescription medication
- Remember that the unpleasant symptoms will eventually disappear

Reference:

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