

Cancer Treatment Side Effects

Cancer treatments, such as radiation and chemotherapy, are used to destroy cancer cells in the body. Cancer cells grow and divide more quickly than healthy cells. Cancer treatments are made to work on these fast growing cells. Radiation and chemotherapy can affect some healthy, fast growing cells causing side effects.

Most people do have some side effects. The side effects you have and how severe they are depend on your treatments and how your body reacts to them. Some of the most common include:

- Tiredness
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Mouth, gum and throat discomfort or sores
- Nausea or vomiting
- Pain
- Hair loss called alopecia
- Skin and nail problems including rashes, redness, itching, peeling, dryness, acne and increased sensitivity to the sun
- Depression or feeling distressed

Common side effects in the blood include:

- Too few red blood cells called anemia. The body tissues do not get enough oxygen.
- Too few white blood cells called neutropenia. This makes it hard for the body to fight infections.
- Too few platelets. This makes the body prone to bruising and bleeding.

The staff will tell you the most common side effects for your type of treatment and ways to deal with them.

Talk to your doctor or nurse to let them know how you feel throughout your cancer treatments and if you have any questions or concerns.