

One-page Treatment and Side Effect Sheets for Cancer Patients (in English and Spanish)

Managing Chemotherapy Side Effects

Appetite Changes

Try these tips to make eating easier:

- Set small times and routines. Eat a little, even if you're not hungry.
- It may help to eat 5 or 6 small meals throughout the day instead of 3 large meals.
- Try new foods to keep up your interest to food.
- Eat each meal with friends, or watch television while you eat.
- Choose foods that are high in calories or protein like those listed on the list of ideas above.
- Ask your doctor or nurse about counseling that may help you eat more healthfully.
- If food tastes like metal, eat with plastic forks or spoons.

Be active. Being active may help you feel more hungry.

- Take a short walk each day.
- Ask your doctor or nurse about activities that can help you.

What are appetite changes?

Some treatment changes you may notice are feeling less hungry and finding that other foods may taste different.

- Eat well to help your body stay strong.
- Let your doctor or nurse know if you lose weight.

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Fatigue (Feeling weak and very tired)

Why do I feel so tired?

Chemotherapy can make you feel tired. So can other things like the disease, which is a sore and swollen throat, weight changes, or having trouble sleeping, can also make you feel tired.

Make a plan to feel less tired.

- Do activities that are most important first.
- Ask others for help.
- Take time off from your job, or work from home.

Many people find it helpful to keep track of their energy level. Some people write down how they are feeling each day in a notebook to share with their doctor. Others use their smart phone or a computer. Tracking can help you and your doctor figure out how to manage or treat your fatigue.

Tell your doctor or nurse if:

- You are not able to do your normal activities.
- You are still very tired, even after resting or sleeping.

Información para pacientes que reciben radioterapia

La radioterapia externa

What To Know About External Beam Radiation Therapy

“Mi doctor me explicó a mi familia y a mí cómo funciona la radioterapia externa. Dijo que este tratamiento es el mejor resultado cuando el paciente lo acepta y lo continúa tal como lo receta el doctor.” -Manuel

Sobre el tratamiento:

- El tratamiento consiste en el uso de radiación. Una dosis (cantidad) alta de radiación para destruir las células cancerosas. También reduce el tamaño de los tumores.
- Una máquina grande dirige la radiación hacia la parte del cuerpo donde está el cáncer. La máquina se mueve a un distancia con la parte del cuerpo.
- No debe volver a radiación. Es decir, no hay que ir a la sala radiación del cuerpo. Es una que puede estar cerca de un tiempo específico y volver.
- La radiación no puede sentir, oír, ver ni oler.

¿Cómo funciona el tratamiento?

El cáncer mata. La radiación es una como lo mata. Si lo destruye, para el tumor fuera dentro del cuerpo. En la radiación, la radiación se usa para destruir las células cancerosas.

La radiación que destruye las células cancerosas también mata las células sanas que están cerca. Es por eso que algunos pacientes pueden tener efectos secundarios. Estos son problemas médicos que pueden ocurrir debido al tratamiento con radiación.

¿Cuándo tiempo dura el tratamiento?

- Cuando dura el tratamiento depende del tipo de cáncer que tenga. También depende de la etapa en que está el cáncer.
- La mayoría de los tratamientos duran de 2 a 10 sesiones.
- La mayoría de los tratamientos duran una vez al día por 5 días seguidos. Por lo general, el tratamiento se da de lunes a viernes. A veces se puede dar dos veces en un día.
- La mayoría de las citas para su tratamiento duran de 30 minutos a una hora. Los pacientes suelen recibir un descanso de 15 minutos.
- Para planificar mejor que consulte con la sala de tratamiento durante el día de tratamiento. En esta sesión se le da consejos de lo que debe hacer antes, durante y después de su tratamiento.

Managing Radiation Therapy Side Effects

What To Do About Feeling Sick to Your Stomach and Throwing Up (Nausea and Vomiting)

“I asked my doctor questions to make sure I knew when to take my medicine. The medicine really helped me.”

What are nausea and vomiting?

Nausea is when you feel sick to your stomach. You are going to throw up. Vomiting is when you throw up.

Drink enough liquids each day to prevent dehydration. Don't drink too much water from the bottle.

Ask your doctor or nurse about medicine that will help. Learn how you should take the medicine.

Take these steps to feel better:

Take your anti-nausea medicine.

- Take with your dinner or meal, about the best time and ways to take your medicine.
- Did your nurse if the medicine is not helping. There are different kinds of medicines, and one may work better than another for you.

Try tips to settle your stomach.

- Get fresh air and open up your stomach. Go for a walk on the other side of the street.
- Eat 5 to 6 small meals instead of 3 large meals each day.
- Don't eat and drink closely.
- Don't lie down right after eating. Instead, sit up for a while.

Avoid some foods.

- Don't eat greasy, fried, or spicy foods if you feel sick after eating them.
- Don't eat foods that are too hot or too cold if they make you sick to your stomach.
- If the smell of food bothers you, ask others to cook for you. Then let the food cool down before you eat it.



What treatments are explained?

- NCI has treatment sheets to help patients learn what to expect and get answers to commonly asked questions:
- Understanding Chemotherapy (*Información sobre la quimioterapia*)
 - Understanding Radiation Therapy: What To Know About External Beam Radiation Therapy (*Información sobre la radioterapia: Lo que debe saber sobre la radioterapia externa*)
 - Understanding Radiation Therapy: What To Know About Brachytherapy (*Información sobre la radioterapia: Lo que debe saber sobre la braquiterapia (un tipo de radioterapia interna)*)

What side effects are covered?

NCI also has side effect sheets that are designed to strengthen patients' consultations with their health care providers. They include practical advice, questions for patients to ask, and health conditions that may need urgent medical care.

- Anemia (*Anemia*)
- Appetite changes (*Falta de apetito*)
- Bleeding problems (*Si tiene sangrado*)
- Constipation (*Si tiene estreñimiento*)
- Diarrhea (*Si tiene diarrea*)
- Fatigue (*Cansancio y debilidad*)
- Hair loss (*Caída del pelo*)
- Infection (*Infecciones*)
- Memory changes (*Cambios en la memoria*)
- Mouth and throat changes (*Boca y garganta*)
- Nausea and vomiting (*Náuseas y vómitos*)
- Nerve changes (*Cambios en los nervios*)
- Pain (*Si tiene dolor*)
- Sexual and fertility changes in men (*Cambios en la sexualidad y en la fertilidad de los hombres*)
- Sexual and fertility changes in women (*Cambios en la sexualidad y en la fertilidad de las mujeres*)
- Skin and nail changes (*La piel y las uñas*)
- Swelling (*Hinchazón y retención de líquidos*)
- Urination changes (*Cambios en la necesidad de orinar*)

How can I get copies?

Hard copies of some sheets can be ordered at <https://pubs.cancer.gov/ncipl/>. You can also view these and other publications on our patient education page at <https://www.cancer.gov/publications/patient-education>. To get information about NCI print files for these sheets, send an email to ncipoetinfo@mail.nih.gov.