



NYUCancerInstitute

P A T I E N T I N F O R M A T I O N

The side effects listed below are those that occur most frequently. Other side effects may occur; please contact your doctor or oncology nurse to report any medical problems.

Dose _____

LOW WHITE BLOOD CELL COUNT

Chemotherapy may cause a decrease in the number of white blood cells, which help fight infection. If the number of white cells in your blood is reduced there is a higher risk of getting an infection.

Following these guidelines may help minimize the possibility of developing an infection.

- Avoid exposure to infections. This includes avoiding people with colds, the flu or chicken pox.
- Animal excreta harbors high level of fungi and bacteria. Avoid cleaning birdcages and cat litter and areas containing dog excreta.
- Avoid sources of stagnant water such as flower vases. For example, change water in vases daily.
- Wash fresh fruit and vegetables well.
- Avoid salad bars.
- Avoid raw eggs, meat and fish.
- Eat a balanced diet and get adequate rest.
- Maintain good body and dental hygiene. Wash your hands frequently.
- Avoid breaks in the skin (e.g. *manicures, pedicures, shaving*) that can cause infections. If you cut or scrape your skin, clean the area at once with warm water and soap.
- After each bowel movement, clean the rectal area gently but thoroughly. If you experience any rectal discomfort, notify your physician immediately!
- Avoid the use of antiperspirants, which may clog pores. However, you can use deodorant.
- Check for early signs of infection and contact your physician immediately if any of these symptoms occur:

-Fever (*a temperature over 100°F*).

-Needing to urinate more often, cloudy or bloody urine, difficulty urinating or burning when urinating.

-Diarrhea or loose bowel movements.

-Sore throat, cough, shortness of breath, chills or night sweats.

-Signs of inflammation, swelling, redness, heat, edema, pus formation or pain.

-Rectal discomfort.