

CANCER EXPLAINED PRESENTS

A FREE HEALTH HANDOUT

WHEN TO CALL YOUR CARE TEAM

Simple signs that mean call now, call today, or mention at your next visit

FREE TO PRINT · PLAIN LANGUAGE · SOURCES ON THE BACK

A CANCER EXPLAINED HANDOUT · BASED ON **NCI · NHLBI · MEDLINEPLUS · ACS** · UPDATED **2026-11-05**
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cancer explained.org

EMERGENCY: CALL 911 OR GO TO THE NEAREST EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

- ! **Chest pain or pressure, or trouble breathing.**
- ! **Sudden confusion, or you cannot be woken.**
- ! **Bleeding that will not stop, or coughing or throwing up blood.**
- ! **Swelling of the face, lips, tongue, or throat, or a sudden severe allergic reaction.**
- ! **Signs of a stroke: a drooping face, weakness in an arm or leg, or slurred speech.**
- ! **A seizure, or fainting.**
- ! **Do not drive yourself if you feel very unwell. Call 911.**

1 Call your care team right away (or use your after-hours number)

- ☐ A fever during treatment — a temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, or shaking chills. Call your oncology team at once. If you cannot reach them, go to the emergency department.
- ☐ New blood in urine or stool.
- ☐ Vomiting or diarrhea that will not stop, not being able to keep food, drink, or medicine down, or signs of dehydration.
- ☐ Redness, swelling, pain, or pus near an IV site or port, or a new rash.
- ☐ Swelling, pain, warmth, or redness in one leg or arm.
- ☐ New weakness in your legs, or new trouble controlling your bladder or bowels.
- ☐ Thoughts of harming yourself: call or text 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline) right away.

2 Call the same day

- ☐ Pain that is new, getting worse, or not helped by your usual medicine.
- ☐ Pain or burning when you urinate, or passing very little urine.
- ☐ Mouth sores that make it hard to eat or drink.

3 Mention at your next visit

- ☐ Tiredness, mild aches, or trouble sleeping that you can still manage.
- ☐ Questions about diet, activity, or feelings of worry or low mood.

4 Keep these numbers handy

Care team (daytime): _____

After-hours / on-call number: _____

Nearest emergency room: _____

THE BOTTOM LINE

When in doubt, call. Care teams would far rather hear from you early than late. During treatment, a fever can be an emergency — do not wait.

This resource is provided by:

Fill in the patient's own care-team and after-hours numbers before handing this out — the blank lines are meant to be completed.

Sources: NCI: Side effects (cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/side-effects) · NHLBI: Heart attack symptoms (nhlbi.nih.gov/health/heart-attack/symptoms) · MedlinePlus: When to call 911 (medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000593.htm) · NCI: Infection and neutropenia during treatment (cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/side-effects/infection) · ACS: Chemotherapy side effects (cancer.org/cancer/treatment-types/chemotherapy/chemotherapy-side-effects.html) · 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (988lifeline.org)

Learn more in plain language: cancerexplained.org/side-effects/fever-during-chemotherapy · **Updated:** 2026-11-05

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