

Cancer Immunotherapy Checklist

For immune checkpoint inhibitors such as pembrolizumab (Keytruda), nivolumab (Opdivo), or ipilimumab (Yervoy).

NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	LAST UPDATED

1 My treatment

IMMUNOTHERAPY DRUG NAME(S)	OTHER CANCER MEDICINES GIVEN WITH IT

START DATE	SCHEDULE (EVERY ____ WEEKS)	LAST DOSE DATE	DOSES SO FAR	PLANNED END / REVIEW DATE

2 Biomarker tests: ask which were done

Tumor tests can help show whether a checkpoint inhibitor is likely to help. Not every test fits every cancer. Ask: "Which tests were done on my tumor, and what did they show?"^{2,5}

Test	Done?	Result (as told to me)	Date / lab
PD-L1 a protein some tumors make	☐		
MSI-H or dMMR DNA repair (mismatch repair) testing	☐		
TMB tumor mutational burden	☐		
Genomic panel or other test name:	☐		

3 My care team, day and night

ONCOLOGIST / PHONE	ONCOLOGY NURSE OR NAVIGATOR / PHONE
AFTER-HOURS / ON-CALL LINE	INFUSION CENTER / PHONE
NEAREST EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT	PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER / PHONE

4 Before each infusion

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ I called the day before to confirm my labs are done and current and my treatment order is in. | ☐ I asked whether the insurance approval covers this dose, not just the first one. |
| ☐ I know my labs include liver, kidney, and thyroid (hormone) checks. These can find side effects before I feel them. ³ | ☐ I wrote down every new symptom since my last dose, even mild ones, to tell the nurse. |
| ☐ I brought my medicine list, including vitamins and supplements. | ☐ I asked whether I will get any medicine that makes me drowsy, and if I need a driver. |

TRU-TIP • Call the day before every infusion

Your treatment is ordered and approved for each visit, and it is mixed for you on the day you get it. Old labs, a missing order, or an approval that ran out can cancel the visit after you are already in the chair. A two-minute call the day before can catch it.⁸

TRU-TIP • Never skip a lab draw

Liver, kidney, and hormone side effects often show up on blood work first, before you feel anything. That is why labs are checked so often. If you miss a lab appointment, call to reschedule it the same day.^{3,8}

QUESTIONS FOR MY NEXT VISIT

CALL 911 FOR AN EMERGENCY

Severe trouble breathing, chest pain or pressure, fainting, a seizure, or sudden confusion. Do not drive yourself. Do not delay emergency care trying to reach the oncology office.⁹ At the ER, say first: “I am on immunotherapy. My drug is _____. My last dose was _____.”³

DURING AN INFUSION

Tell the nurse right away about chills, fever, flushing, itching, rash, dizziness, wheezing, chest tightness, or trouble breathing. These can be signs of an infusion reaction.⁴

5 Side effects by body system

Immunotherapy can cause inflammation almost anywhere in the body, during treatment or after it ends.^{1,3} These are examples, not every possible side effect. If your team gave you different rules, follow theirs. Ask: “Which side effects need urgent care, and where should I go?”³

Body system	Call your oncology team the SAME DAY	Go to the ER or call your team NOW
Lungs	New cough, or shortness of breath that is new or worse, even if mild. ^{3,8}	Trouble breathing at rest, can't speak in full sentences, or lips turning blue: call 911 .
Gut colon, belly	New or worse diarrhea, belly pain, or blood or mucus in stool. Do not take Imodium (loperamide) or other anti-diarrhea medicine before calling your team. ^{3,6,8}	Severe belly pain, black or bloody stools, or diarrhea with fever, dizziness, or fainting.
Skin	New rash, itching, or sores. Take a dated photo. Do not use old prescription creams without asking. ^{3,8}	Blisters, peeling skin, or sores in the mouth, eyes, or genitals, especially with fever.
Hormone glands thyroid, pituitary, adrenal	Unusual tiredness, headaches that won't go away, feeling too hot or too cold, weight change, or dizziness. ³	Very weak, confused, fainting, or vomiting and unable to keep fluids down.
Liver	Yellow skin or eyes, dark urine, pain on the upper right side of the belly, nausea, or easy bruising or bleeding. ³ Often no symptoms at first; labs catch it.	Yellow skin or eyes with confusion, severe belly pain, or bleeding that will not stop.
Nerves and brain	New numbness, tingling, or weakness in the hands, feet, or face. ³	Sudden confusion, seizure, severe headache with fever, or weakness that spreads or affects breathing or swallowing: call 911 .
Heart	Do not wait for a call back. Any heart symptom goes in the next column. ⁸	Chest pain or pressure, a racing or irregular heartbeat, fainting, or sudden shortness of breath: call 911 . ^{3,9}
Eyes	Eye pain or redness, blurry vision, or new sensitivity to light. ³	Sudden loss of vision, or severe eye pain.
Kidneys, joints, muscles	Less urine, blood in urine, new swelling; new joint pain or muscle weakness. ³	Barely passing any urine, or so weak you can't stand up from a chair.

Feeling “off” in a way you can't name also counts. Call. Fever: if you also get chemotherapy, a temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher means call your team right away, day or night.⁷

DIFFERENT INSTRUCTIONS MY TEAM GAVE ME (THEIR NUMBERS AND RULES COME FIRST)

TRU-TIP • Same-day means today, not next visit

Immunotherapy side effects are usually easier to treat when they are caught early, and your team may need to pause a dose or start medicine. Mild symptoms can get worse fast. Call the same day, even on a Friday afternoon, and use the after-hours line at night or on weekends.^{3,8}

6 Symptom log

Write it down when it starts, not when you remember it. Rate how bad: 0 = none, 10 = worst.

[illegible]

TRU-TIP • Get a name, a date, and a reference number

Each time you call, write down who you spoke with, the date and time, what they told you, and any reference number. If the answer changes later, or a call-back never comes, you have a record to point to.⁸

7 Immunotherapy wallet card

I HAVE HAD IMMUNOTHERAPY Tell every provider and ER you've had immunotherapy. Side effects can start months after the last dose. ^{1,8} Please contact my oncology team before treating me.	DRUG NAME(S)
	LAST DOSE DATE
	ONCOLOGY AFTER-HOURS PHONE

✂ Cut along the outer dashed line, fold in the middle, and keep it with your ID or insurance card. Also tell your dentist, primary care provider, and pharmacist.

Want to go further? Infusing Hope by Chuck Kinney and the SynquUp™ Oncology Emergency Life Binder, with its full immunotherapy side-effect guide, help you track every dose, lab, and reaction. Free tools: chuckkinney.com/free