

When to Call or Go to the ER

During cancer treatment. Post it on the fridge. Fill in the boxes now, not during an emergency.

ONCOLOGY CLINIC PHONE

AFTER-HOURS / ON-CALL LINE

NEAREST ER

MY TREATMENT

LAST TREATMENT DATE

EMERGENCY CONTACT / PHONE

CALL 911 NOW

Do not drive yourself.

- Severe trouble breathing, or struggling to breathe⁷
- Fainting, or very hard to wake up⁷
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking, face drooping, or weakness on one side⁷
- Bleeding that will not stop with pressure⁷
- Chest pain or pressure⁷
- A seizure⁷
- Sudden, severe headache^{7,10}
- Swelling of the face, lips, or tongue⁷

Then call the oncology after-hours line, or have someone call for you. At the ER, say first: "I am getting cancer treatment. My last treatment was ____."¹

GO TO THE ER OR CALL ONCOLOGY NOW

Day or night. Do not wait for morning.

- **Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher** during chemotherapy¹
- Shortness of breath that is new or getting worse. Do not drive yourself.¹⁰
- Bleeding that does not stop after a few minutes, black or bloody stools, red or pink urine, or vomiting blood³
- Severe belly pain, especially with vomiting⁵
- Shaking chills, even without a fever^{2,10}
- One leg or arm swollen, painful, warm, or red^{8,10}
- Can't keep fluids down for several hours, or very dizzy or weak¹⁰
- Mouth sores with any fever^{1,6}

CALL THE SAME DAY

After hours or weekends: use the on-call line.

- New or worse diarrhea or belly cramping. **Do not take Imodium (loperamide) or other anti-diarrhea medicine before calling.**^{4,9,10}
- No bowel movement in 3 days, or sooner if your team said so^{5,10}
- New rash, itching, or skin changes (take a dated photo)⁹
- Redness, swelling, or drainage at your port or IV site²
- Nausea or vomiting your medicines are not controlling¹⁰
- Mouth sores that make it hard to eat or drink, or white patches in the mouth^{6,10}
- New cough, sore throat, or burning or cloudy urine²
- Unusual bruising, new numbness or tingling, or pain your medicines do not control^{3,10}

TRACK IT AND MENTION IT AT YOUR NEXT VISIT

If it gets worse fast, move it up a zone.

- Tiredness that is about the same as usual
- Taste or appetite changes, hair thinning, dry skin
- Trouble sleeping, worry, or low mood. If you think about harming yourself, call or text **988** now.¹¹
- Mild nausea that your medicines control
- Mild tingling that is not getting worse
- Questions about medicines, costs, or your schedule

TRU-TIP • Call before you take Tylenol

If you feel warm or "off," take your temperature first. If it is high, call before taking a fever reducer. It can hide the fever your team needs to know about.^{1,2,10}

TRU-TIP • You are not a bother

Your team would rather hear from you at 10 p.m. about a fever that turns out to be nothing than find out the next morning that you waited. When in doubt, call.¹⁰

Want to go further? The SynquUp™ Oncology Emergency Life Binder and Infusing Hope by Chuck Kinney. Free tools: chuckkinney.com/free

This sign does not replace your care team's instructions. If your team gave you different numbers or rules, follow theirs. Not medical advice. Download, fill in a PDF reader, save, then reopen to check entries.

Sources: 1. CDC, Watch Out for Fever (cdc.gov/cancer-preventing-infections/patients/fever.html) · 2. NCI, Infection and Neutropenia (cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/side-effects/infection) · 3. NCI, Bleeding and Bruising (cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/side-effects/bleeding-bruising) · 4. NCI, Diarrhea (cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/side-effects/diarrhea) · 5. NCI, Constipation (cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/side-effects/constipation) · 6. NCI, Mouth and Throat Problems (cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/side-effects/mouth-throat) · 7. MedlinePlus, Recognizing medical emergencies (medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001927.htm) · 8. MedlinePlus, Deep venous thrombosis (medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000156.htm) · 9. NCI, Immunotherapy and Organ Inflammation (cancer.gov) · 10. Chuck Kinney, Infusing Hope (SynquUp) · 11. 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (988lifeline.org)