

National Cancer Institute

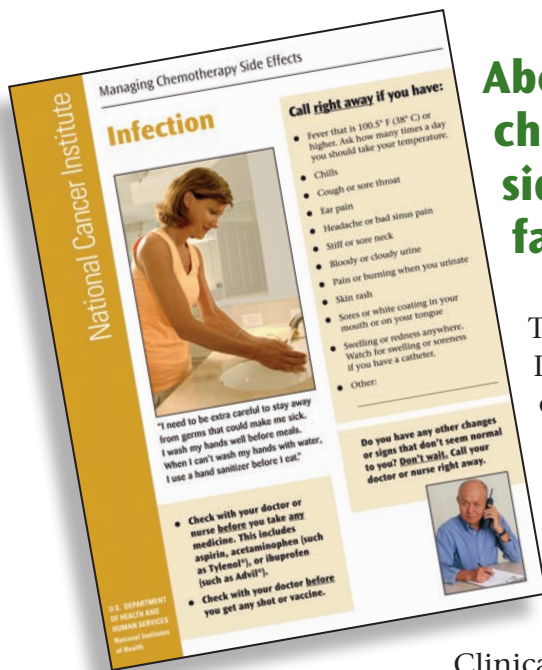
**Helping Providers Help Their Patients**

**Using the  
Chemotherapy  
Side Effects  
Fact Sheets**

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**National Institutes of Health**





## About the chemotherapy side effects facts sheets

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) worked closely with health care providers and patients at cancer centers across the country, and with providers at the National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Clinical Center, to develop this

chemotherapy educational series. The series

includes 18 free fact sheets to help patients manage side effects and a pamphlet about chemotherapy.

The one-page fact sheets offer practical tips to strengthen your patients' understanding of, and ability to prevent or manage, side effects. The chemotherapy pamphlet describes what chemotherapy is and how it works.

Easy-to-understand language, engaging quotes, photographs, and questions can also help your patients understand and actively participate in their care. The information is intended to complement your patients' individualized consultation with you, their health care provider.

See the last two pages of this booklet for a list of topics and information on how to order these handouts.

**Research shows that early side-effect management and pretreatment information may help decrease patients' fears and anxiety and increase understanding of treatment.\***

\* Hofman, et al. 2004. Cancer patients' expectations of experiencing treatment-related side effects. *Cancer*. 101(4):851-857.

## Here is what providers said about these handouts during pilot testing:

"The materials address all of the issues patients are concerned about in an easy to follow format."

"These handouts hit the highlights patients need to know about at the beginning of treatment. And it's nice to have one sheet to give people."

"The information is user-friendly and culturally sensitive. I'll hand these out to my patients."

"When I was going through them, I thought—I could teach from this. I could take this in and sit down with my patient, and we could just go through this."

## Tips on using the chemotherapy fact sheets in a clinical setting:

### 1. Hand out the relevant fact sheets to your patient.

Talk about the information on the fact sheet while the patient is in your office.

- Discussing these fact sheets during an office visit can increase your patient's likelihood of reading and using them at home.
- When patients understand what to expect during treatment and the actions to take, they will have less anxiety about side effects.
- The fact sheets can be given to patients in the waiting room or during discussions about chemotherapy and specific side effects.



### 2. Highlight or circle important information and action steps.

Use a highlighter or a colored pen to draw attention to key information and action steps on each fact sheet.

- This simple act can increase your patient's adherence to the actions you would like him or her to take.

### 3. Use the teach-back technique.

For important behaviors and information, ask your patients to share in their own words what they learn.

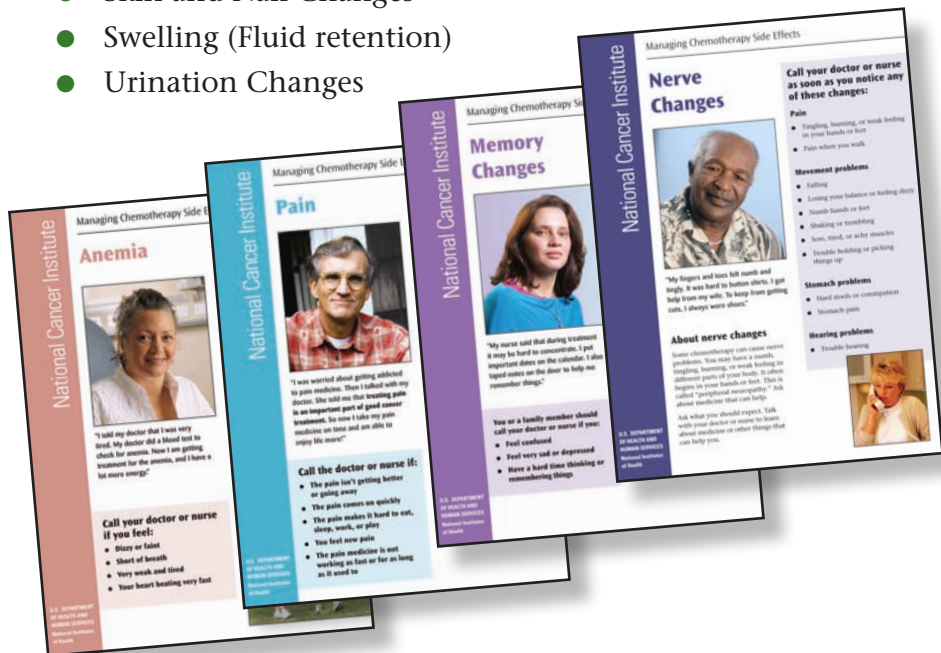
- Confirming patient understanding through the teach-back technique has been shown to improve patient recall and comprehension.
- Applying the teach-back technique during the patient consult can help avoid misunderstanding. It can also reduce the time spent educating patients during subsequent visits.





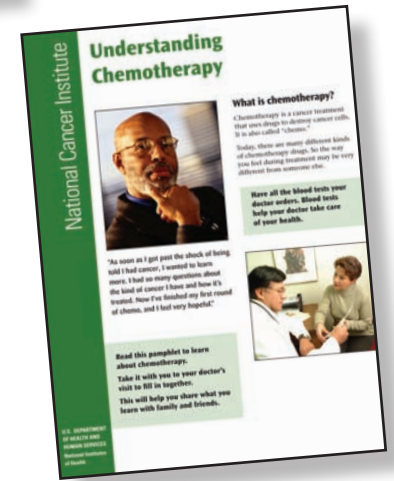
# Chemotherapy Side Effects Fact Sheets

- Anemia
- Appetite Changes
- Bleeding Problems
- Constipation
- Diarrhea
- Fatigue (Feeling weak and very tired)
- Hair Loss (Alopecia)
- Infection
- Memory Changes
- Mouth and Throat Changes
- Nausea and Vomiting
- Nerve Changes
- Pain
- Sexual and Fertility Changes in Men
- Sexual and Fertility Changes in Women
- Skin and Nail Changes
- Swelling (Fluid retention)
- Urination Changes



## Chemotherapy Treatment Pamphlet

- Understanding Chemotherapy



Order the chemotherapy side effects fact sheets in tear-off pads of 50 sheets or as single copies:

- Call the National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service at 1-800-422-6237 (1-800-4-CANCER).
- Or visit us online at [www.cancer.gov/publications](http://www.cancer.gov/publications).

*NOTE: Product or brand names that appear in these fact sheets are for example only. The U.S. Government does not endorse any specific product or brand. If products or brands are not mentioned, it does not mean or imply that they are not satisfactory.*

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