

Fever During Chemotherapy Treatment

Cancer patients need to be extra careful when they get a fever. Fever is a higher than normal body temperature. It can be a sign that you have an infection. Often it is the only sign. An infection that happens when you are taking chemotherapy (chemo) can be life-threatening.

What to Do

Keep a fever thermometer nearby and know how to use it. You can buy a thermometer at any drugstore.

Take your temperature every 2–3 hours any time you feel any of these things:

- Warm
- Flush
- Chilled
- Unwell

Write down your temperature each time you take it. This information can help your cancer care team.

If your temperature is 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, call your cancer care team right away and follow their instructions.

Do not take any medicine to lower your temperature unless your cancer care team says it is OK.

If you cannot reach your cancer care team or the Huntsman Cancer Institute oncologist on call, go to the emergency room right away. Be sure to tell the person checking you in that you are a cancer patient taking chemo.

Other Signs to Watch For

You may also notice other changes that could be signs of infection:

- Feeling more tired than usual
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Body aches
- Rashes on skin
- New redness or swelling
- Pus or yellow fluid coming from a wound
- New cough or shortness of breath
- New belly pain
- Pain when urinating

If you have any of these signs along with fever, tell your cancer care team.

Reaction to Chemotherapy

Some patients get fever and other flu-like signs such as body aches and headaches as a side effect of chemo. Your cancer care team cannot tell whether your fever comes from an infection or a side effect without seeing you. **Be sure to call your team any time you have a temperature 100.4°F (38°C) or higher.**

If your temperature is

100.4°F (38°C) or higher,

call your cancer care team right away—day or night.

Contact your cancer care team via MyChart or call _____.

In an emergency, call 911 or go to your closest emergency department.

Tell them you are a cancer patient taking chemotherapy.