Hand-Foot Syndrome

What Is Hand-Foot Syndrome?
Hand-foot syndrome is a side effect of some types of chemotherapy (chemo). Hand-foot syndrome happens when a small amount of the drug in tiny blood vessels leaks into the surrounding skin.

These chemo drugs can cause hand-foot syndrome:
- Capecitabine
- Cytarabine
- Doxil
- Doxorubicin
- Fluorouracil
- Sorafenib
- Sunitinib
- Pazopanib
- Vemurafenib

Not everyone who takes these chemo drugs will get hand-foot syndrome.

Signs of Hand-Foot Syndrome
Watch for these signs in the soles of your feet and palms of your hands:
- Blisters
- Burning
- Peeling
- Pain
- Redness
- Swelling
- Tingling

Preventing Hand-Foot Syndrome
Exposing your hands and feet to hot temperatures, friction, and chemicals can trigger hand-foot syndrome or make it worse if you already have it.

Follow these tips:

**DO**
- Keep hot water off your hands and feet. Use warm water to wash. Take warm showers or baths.
- Pat dry with a towel to prevent friction.
- Gently rub thick moisturizing cream on your hands and feet each day. Use a cream without alcohol or perfumes. At bedtime, use a thick layer of moisturizing cream and cover the hands and feet with cotton gloves and socks while you sleep.
- Elevate hands and feet when you can.
- Wear loose clothes and shoes that let air move around your feet.
- If you need to wear rubber gloves, make sure they have an inside lining.
- Talk with your cancer care team about using ice packs on wrists and ankles during chemotherapy.

**DON’T**
- Don’t let your skin get hot. Avoid hot tubs, saunas, and sitting in the sun.
- Don’t do things that cause too much force or friction. These include home chores such as sweeping and mopping. Also avoid jogging, aerobics, and racquet sports.
- Don’t use harsh cleaning chemicals.
- Don’t use tools that require hand force, such as screwdrivers and knives.
- Don’t carry heavy objects such as grocery bags.

When Should I Call My Doctor?
Call your cancer care team right away if you see any signs of hand-foot syndrome. They can help with treatment and pain relief.

Severe hand-foot syndrome can cause serious infections.
If you see signs of it on your hands or feet, tell your cancer care team right away.

For more patient education information: Call 1-888-424-2100 toll free • Email cancerinfo@hci.utah.edu • Visit www.huntsmancancer.org
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