



Information for
patients and
carers

Neutropenic Sepsis

What is neutropenia?

Neutropenia is where there is a decrease in the number of circulating neutrophils in the bloodstream and is a common complication of chemotherapy.

What are neutrophils?

Neutrophils are produced in the bone marrow and circulate in the blood. They are a type of white blood cell that responds to infections and attacks bacteria and other foreign invaders directly.

If your neutrophils do decrease, then your risk of infection increases - this is why we ask you to:

- Avoid contact with anyone who has an obvious infection
- Avoid unpasteurised milk and cheese
- Avoid raw and undercooked eggs
- Avoid undercooked food
- Wash your hands before you prepare and eat food
- Wash your hands after handling animals, fresh flowers or pot plants
- Clean your teeth regularly

What should I be looking for?

If you develop any signs of infection such as:

- A temperature of 38.0°C or above
- Uncontrollable shivering, chills or shaking
- A sore throat
- Diarrhoea
- A cough or shortness of breath

- Discomfort or burning when you pass urine
- Or if you just do not feel 'well'

What do I do next?

It is important that you contact the 24 hour helpline for advice, as you may have developed neutropenic sepsis. This is where your neutrophils are low and you have developed an infection, which is a serious, potentially life threatening condition.

Once you have contacted the advice line about your symptoms you will be advised to attend the hospital for assessment.

The nurse taking your call will advise you on where you need to go.

What can I expect once I arrive at the hospital?

Once you arrive in hospital, you can expect:

- Bloods to be taken to assess your neutrophil count
- Antibiotics to be administered within 60 minutes of arrival to hospital
- Once you have been assessed, you may be able to go home — but this will depend on your blood results and how you feel. If the decision is made for you to stay in, then you will be reviewed by the Acute Oncology Team

The best way to treat neutropenic sepsis is to recognise the signs and symptoms early and to ensure that appropriate antibiotics are given within 60 minutes of arriving at the hospital.

It is important to:

- Recognise and acknowledge if you are feeling unwell
- Take your temperature if you feel unwell
- Contact the 24 hour oncology helpline

Contact details

IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS YOU MUST NOT WAIT, RING THE HELPLINE.

The 24 hour helpline is available on: 01772 523205

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

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If you want to stop smoking you can also contact the Quit Squad Freephone 0800 328 6297.

Please ask if you would like help in understanding this information. This information can be made available in large print and in other languages.

Gujarati:

આ માહિતીને સમજવામાં સહાયતા જોઈતી હોય તો કૃપા કરીને પૂછો. આ માહિતી મોટા છપાણામાં અને અન્ય ભાષામાં ઉપલબ્ધ કરી શકાય છે.

Romanian:

Vă rugăm să întrebați dacă aveți nevoie de ajutor pentru înțelegerea acestor informații. Aceste informații pot fi puse la dispoziție în format mare și în alte limbi.”

Polish:

Poinformuj nas, jeśli potrzebna jest ci pomoc w zrozumieniu tych informacji. Informacje te można również udostępnić dużym drukiem oraz w innych językach

Punjabi:

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਸਮਝਣ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮਦਦ ਲੈਣੀ ਚਾਹੋਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਪੁੱਛੋ। ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਵੱਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਟ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮੁਹੱਈਆ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

Urdu:

دو سر ی زبانوں او ر بڑی اگر آپ کو ہی معلومات سمجھنے کے لیے مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو یی چھپا یں ییہ ابی دست بو یسکت ہے برا ئے مہر یان پو ے یچھہ ی۔ معلومات

Arabic:

مطبو عة بأ حر ف كبير ة و بلغات إذا كنت تر يد مسا عدة في فهم هذه لمعلومات يُر جى أن تطلب أخرى يمكن تو فسير هذه المعلوما ت

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