

Neuropathy (nerve side effects)

What is neuropathy?

Some chemotherapies can cause problems with your nerves, resulting in a condition called neuropathy (new-RAH-puh-thee). You may feel tingling, burning, weakness, numbness, or pain in your hands or feet. There are different types of neuropathy.

Most of the time, patients recover from neuropathy; however, there is a chance that full recovery can take up to a year. Tell your doctor or nurse if you have any problems with your nerves.

Some nerve-related symptoms include:

- Tingling, burning, weakness, or numbness in the hands or feet
- Pain or difficulty walking
- Clumsiness or loss of balance
- Difficulty picking things up or buttoning clothes
- Shaking or trembling
- Jaw pain
- Loss of hearing

How can I cope with nerve problems?

- If you have numbness in your fingers, be very careful when grasping sharp, or dangerous objects
- With certain types of chemotherapy you should avoid exposure to cold. Cover your skin before entering cold places or touching cold objects. Avoid cold drinks and foods
- Wear shoes with rubber soles whenever possible, and gloves, socks, and hats, when appropriate
- If you have problems with strength or balance, move carefully, use handrails on stairs, and place bath mats in the tub or shower
- If movement is difficult or painful, notify your healthcare team, prioritize your activities, request assistance from others, rearrange your environment so that what you need is within arm's reach, etc

Chemotherapy can cause different types of neuropathy. It is important that you and your doctor discuss what kind of neuropathy you have and different ways that you can help cope with this side effect. Ask your doctor if there are medications or treatments that are appropriate for your symptoms.

Also ask if alternative treatments are appropriate, such as:

- Massage, physical therapy or learning to position your body differently
- Distraction or relaxation training, hypnosis, or acupuncture

Name: _____

Institution/Group: _____

Phone: _____

Notes: _____

Call your doctor or nurse if your nerve or muscle problems worsen.

The information contained herein is not comprehensive and is intended only as a guide.