

When to Talk To Your Doctor Or Health Care Professional

- Notify your health care professional as early as possible if you are experiencing any of the above symptoms, or
- If you are experiencing unrelieved pain

For More Information

The following websites can provide you with additional information about Chemotherapy-Induced Peripheral Neuropathy:

www.cancersymptoms.org

www.cancer.net

Chemotherapy - Induced Peripheral Neuropathy

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For more copies, go online at <http://vch.eduhealth.ca> or email pchem@vch.ca and quote Catalogue No. **FE.226.C54**
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What is Chemotherapy - Induced Peripheral Neuropathy? (per-if-eral new-rop-athy)

Chemotherapy medications, like other medications, may have side effects. Some chemotherapy medications have the risk of causing damage to the nerves in your hands and feet. Damage to these nerves may affect your sensation, movement, and coordination.

The severity of Peripheral Neuropathy is related to the type of chemotherapy drug you are receiving, how much you are receiving, and your chemotherapy administration schedule.

Most people experience temporary side effects that will go away slowly, although unfortunately in some cases these symptoms may be permanent.

What You Might Feel

The symptoms you may experience will vary depending on your chemotherapy treatment.

The feelings tend to start in your fingers and toes and this might start any time after your first few treatments, to weeks, months, or years following your first chemotherapy treatment.

Here are some of the things you might feel:

- Numbness or tingling (“pins & needles”) in your hands and/or feet
- A burning sensation in your hands and/or feet
- A decreased sensation to touch
- Decreased ability to feel hot and cold
- Difficulty picking things up, writing, or buttoning clothes
- Some people may feel pain in their hands and/or feet

How Does This Affect Me?

People experiencing Peripheral Neuropathy may be at increased risk of hurting themselves because of the decreased feeling in their hands and feet.

The most important thing you can do if you experience these symptoms is to speak to your health care professional (Nurse, Oncologist) as soon as possible so that your chemotherapy treatment can be adjusted.

This may help reduce the uncomfortable feelings you are experiencing.

Hand And Foot Care

- Use protective gloves when washing dishes or gardening
- Use pot holders when handling hot items
- Use protective, non-slip foot wear and never go bare foot
- Wear cotton or wool socks to absorb sweat
- Avoid soaking feet
- Use non-skid shower and tub mats and remove throw rugs to decrease the risk of falling
- Wash and dry your feet daily
- Use skin care creams to keep the skin soft and treat the dry skin.
- Keep hallways well lit to avoid hitting objects that might be in the way
- Use handrails if you feel unsteady
- Look at your hands and feet daily. Check the color of your hands and feet and look for cuts, scratches, and blisters that you may not have noticed.

