

# Infection

Infection cannot be completely prevented. However, there are things you can do to decrease the risk of infection. You are most susceptible to getting an infection about seven to ten days after your chemotherapy infusion if your white blood cells are affected. Most infections come from result from your body's inability to fight off normal bacteria present in your mouth, intestines and genital tract. Sometimes, the cause of an infection may not be known. Bacterial infections do not commonly result from being in a crowded place, however, viral infections such as colds and flu are common and are transmitted easily from other people, usually by hand to hand contact.

## When to call your doctor:

- Fever of 100.5° or greater
- Shaking chills
- Diarrhea with a fever
- Burning or stinging when urinating
- A new cough with yellow or green sputum production

## To help to decrease your risk of getting an infection:

- **WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN.** The single most important thing you can do to protect yourself is for you and family and friends in close contact with you is for you and they to wash hands frequently. Proper hand washing may eliminate nearly half of all cases of food borne illness and significantly reduce the spread of the common cold and flu. Use any soap you prefer, the key is washing and rubbing your hands thoroughly for 10 seconds.
- Examples of when to wash your and your family should wash hands:
  - After using the toilet
  - After handshaking
  - After changing a diaper
  - Before eating or preparing food to eat
  - After contact with someone who is very young or old
- Hand sanitizers may be used instead of hand washing unless your hands are visibly soiled or if your skin is dry and cracked.
- In general, it is fine to go to public places. Avoid if possible tightly crowded places during the height of the cold/flu season. Generally a mask will not offer much protection from viruses, so it's better to avoid close contact with people coughing and sneezing.
- Stay away from people who have illness you can catch, such as a cold or flu.
- Keep your body clean by showering or bathing regularly. Do not share towels.

## Food Safety:

- Wash hands, utensils, and surfaces with hot soapy water before and after food preparation, especially after preparing meat.
- Keep raw meat, poultry, eggs and seafood away from ready-to-eat foods.
- Cook food well. Cook meat until it is no longer pink and the juices are clear. Bring sauces, soups, and gravies to a boil when reheating.
- Refrigerate leftovers within two hours
- Thaw food at room temperature – not in the refrigerator.
- Thoroughly wash all fruits and vegetables.