

Oxaliplatin Related Cold Sensitivity and Numbness

Numbness and tingling in the hands and feet

The chemotherapy drug Oxaliplatin may cause neuropathy, which is numbness and tingling in the hands and feet that can happen when some nerve cells stop functioning properly. A person who has neuropathy may have a less sensitive sense of touch in the fingertips. The person may also experience tingling, sometimes described as a “pins and needles” sensation, and/or numbness in the fingers and toes and sometimes the throat or other areas of the body. You may have difficulty picking up a very small object or buttoning a shirt. Handling cold objects may increase this sensation.

Cold sensitivity related to Oxaliplatin

Cold sensitivity neuropathy may start soon after, and sometimes during, the first Oxaliplatin infusion. This kind of neuropathy usually lasts approximately 5-7 days. As you receive more Oxaliplatin treatments, you may experience this kind of side effect more often, and it may last longer.

Some patients may experience an acute type of neuropathy called pharyngolaryngeal dysesthesia, which is the sensation that you are not breathing properly—even though you are. This can be caused by drinking cold fluids or inhaling cold air. Symptoms may include having trouble swallowing or talking, jaw tightness, odd feelings in your tongue, and feeling pressure in your chest. While this may seem scary, this is not dangerous. If this happens, warm up the air you are breathing by holding your cupped hands over your nose and mouth or by drinking warm fluids.

In some patients Oxaliplatin can also cause temporary jaw discomfort when biting down on food or chewing.

Tips for managing sensitivity to cold:

- Everything you eat and drink should be at room temperature or warmer. Do not drink cold drinks or put ice cubes in anything you drink. Do not eat cold foods, such as ice cream.
- If it is cold outside, cover up when you go outdoors. Cover your nose and mouth with a scarf when you are exposed to cold air and wear gloves. If your hands get cold, rinse them with warm water as soon as you're back indoors.
- Avoid direct exposure to air conditioning, such as in your car.
- Do not inhale deeply when reaching inside the refrigerator or freezer.
- Do not use an ice pack on any part of your body.
- Wear gloves or oven mitts when handling items from the refrigerator or freezer.