



Peripheral neuropathy

Know it when you start to feel it

Information for patients

Understanding the potential signs and symptoms of peripheral neuropathy during your anticancer treatment



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What is peripheral neuropathy?



Some cancer treatments can affect the nerves in the body, leading to changes in feeling or sensitivity. This condition is known as peripheral neuropathy. Your nurse or doctor will monitor you for signs or symptoms of peripheral neuropathy prior to receiving each cycle of your anticancer treatment.

How long does peripheral neuropathy last?



Peripheral neuropathy is often temporary and improves once treatment stops. How long it takes to improve varies, it can feel very slow, and may take many months or even years. Unfortunately, some people don't fully recover and have permanent effects.



It is very important that you tell your nurse or doctor about any new symptoms as early as possible. You might be worried that your treatment will be stopped if you develop peripheral neuropathy, but rest assured there are other ways of dealing with it. Your doctor or nurse will develop a plan that could involve adding supportive treatment, reducing the dose, or a temporary break in your anticancer treatment to help you manage the symptoms.

Know It

Understand the signs of peripheral neuropathy

Difficulty with any of the following activities are signs that you may be suffering from peripheral neuropathy:

Holding and using
everyday objects such as:

Using buttons
or zips

Tying your
shoelaces



Mobile
phone



Pen



Small
objects



Feel It

Understand what 'changes in feeling or sensitivity' might be

The following symptoms of peripheral neuropathy typically occur in the toes, feet, calves, fingers and/or hands:



Tingling



Numbness



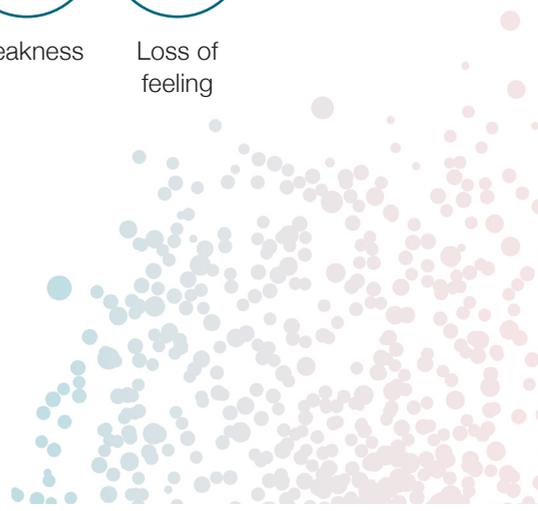
Burning



Weakness



Loss of
feeling



Manage It

Understand what you can do to cope with symptoms

There are some things you can do to help alleviate the symptoms of peripheral neuropathy and reduce the chance of doing yourself harm:



Keep your hands and feet warm



Keep your skin moisturised and soft



Take gentle exercise when possible



Take care when cutting your nails



Wear well fitting, protective shoes



Take care when using stairs



Take care when using hot water – you may not be able to feel how hot the water is, and could burn yourself



Use oven gloves when cooking and protective gloves when gardening

If you do develop peripheral neuropathy when receiving your anticancer treatment, your doctor or nurse may give you a tracker to help you monitor your signs and symptoms.

Remember: Tell your nurse or doctor about any new symptoms or other side effects as early as possible. This includes any possible side effects not listed in the package leaflet that comes with your medicine(s).

UK: You can also report side effects directly via the Yellow Card Scheme at <https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/>

Ireland: You can report side effects to the Pharmacovigilance Unit at the Health Products Regulatory Authority (medsafety@hpra.ie). Information about Adverse Event reporting can be found on the HPRA website (www.hpra.ie)

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