Emergency Care for Patients of The James

Emergency Care During and After Treatment

Here are guidelines about when and how to report problems that you may have during your cancer treatment. Your doctor may give you more detailed directions on how to manage certain problems at home.

You may have problems that need to be checked by your doctor. Sometimes a problem is minor and can wait for medical attention. Other times, a problem may be serious or even life-threatening and need medical attention right away. Talk with your doctor about what treatment side effects may happen and when you should call to report a problem. Use the list at the end of this handout to write down important medical phone numbers.

When Your Doctor’s Office is Closed

You will be given direction for how to reach your doctor when the office is closed.

Medicine Refills

Keep track of your medicines and know when you need a refill. It is important to check your supply of medicines before the weekend or before you go on a vacation. Call your doctor’s office during regular business hours to ask for a refill.

When you need a refill, call your doctor 1 week before you will be out of medicine. This will give your doctor enough time to order the medicine for you.

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptom</th>
<th>Common Problem</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bleeding</strong></td>
<td>Blood in vomit or stool</td>
<td>Call your doctor right away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nose</td>
<td>Use first aid (pinch your nose, put your head forward, place ice pack on nose and back of neck) If still bleeding after 10 minutes, call your doctor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye</td>
<td></td>
<td>Call your doctor right away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petechiae (pin point red dots under the surface of your skin) or bruises</td>
<td>Call your doctor within 24 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urine</td>
<td></td>
<td>Call your doctor right away, unless you have been told otherwise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vagina</td>
<td></td>
<td>Call your doctor within 24 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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| **Fever**            | Temperature                                         | Call your doctor right away if you have a fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or higher  
  *Do not take Tylenol, aspirin, Ibuprofen or Aleve before you call your doctor about a fever* |
<p>| <strong>Cold symptoms</strong>    | Cough                                               | Call your doctor within 24 hours                                      |
|                      | Shortness of breath                                 | Call your doctor right away                                           |
|                      | Sore throat, runny nose                             | Call your doctor within 24 hours                                      |
| <strong>Change in level of alertness</strong> | Unable to wake up or speak                          | Call 911                                                              |
|                      | Severe headache, confusion, dizziness or lightheadedness | Call your doctor right away                                           |</p>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Central Venous Catheter (CVC)</strong></td>
<td>A tear or crack in the catheter</td>
<td>Call your doctor right away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unable to flush catheter</td>
<td>Call your doctor right away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tenderness, redness or drainage where the catheter comes out of your skin</td>
<td>Call your doctor right away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implantable Port</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vomiting or nausea</strong></td>
<td>Blood in vomit or vomit that looks like coffee grounds</td>
<td>Call your doctor right away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unable to keep medicines, food or fluids down</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel lightheaded and dizzy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mouth sores</strong></td>
<td>Unable to swallow fluids or unable to keep food or medicines down</td>
<td>Call your doctor right away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diarrhea (liquid stool, watery, without form)</strong></td>
<td>Stool that has blood in it or looks like black tar</td>
<td>Call your doctor right away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase in the amount and number of times you have diarrhea</td>
<td>Call your doctor within 24 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skin rashes, sores or lesions</strong></td>
<td>Any new symptom</td>
<td>Call your doctor within 24 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eyes</strong></td>
<td>Visual changes</td>
<td>Call your doctor within 24 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Redness or drainage</td>
<td>Call your doctor within 24 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dry, itchy</td>
<td>Call your doctor within 24 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Joint or bone pain, or joint swelling</strong></td>
<td>Any new symptoms or if you need pain medicine</td>
<td>Call your doctor within 24 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abdominal pain or cramping</strong></td>
<td>Severe pain or pain that continues for over 24 hours</td>
<td>Call your doctor right away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chest pain</strong></td>
<td>Pressure or crushing pain in the middle of your chest that may go across your chest to your shoulders, arms (one or both), neck or back</td>
<td>Call 911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indigestion</strong></td>
<td>Stomach pain or gas</td>
<td>Call your doctor within 24 hours</td>
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| New feeling of weakness/numbness in legs and arms | Problems with walking, going up and down stairs, getting out of a chair or car due to leg weakness  
Problems being able to hold on to things or lift your arms due to weakness in your arms | Call your doctor right away  
Your doctor may tell you to go to the emergency room for care  
Your doctor may tell you to go to the emergency room for care |
| New problems with bladder and/or bowel control | Problem with being able to completely empty your bladder  
Problems with being able to control your bowel movements or urine (wetting oneself) | Call your doctor right away  
Your doctor may tell you to go to the emergency room for care  
Your doctor may tell you to go to the emergency room for care |
| Numbness in anal area         | Feeling of numbness when you wipe after going to the bathroom. | Call your doctor right away  
Your doctor may tell you to go to the emergency room for care  
Your doctor may tell you to go to the emergency room for care |
| Neck or back pain             | New pain in your neck or back | Call your doctor right away  
Your doctor may tell you to go to the emergency room for care  
Your doctor may tell you to go to the emergency room for care |
| Uncontrolled pain or new pain | Pain that gets worse or is not controlled by your pain medicine | Call your doctor right away |
| Going home with a wound drain | Signs of infections - redness, swelling or sudden increase in the amount of drainage  
Drain tube comes out of your skin | Call your doctor right away |

Write down your important medical phone numbers. Keep a copy of this information on your refrigerator and in your purse or wallet.
# Important Medical Phone Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergency Squad (Ambulance)</th>
<th>911</th>
<th>Call this number in a medical emergency.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cancer Doctor</td>
<td></td>
<td>Call your doctor for non-emergencies and prescription refills during regular business hours. You will be given directions for how to reach your doctor when the office is closed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Practitioner</td>
<td></td>
<td>Call this number for non-emergencies and prescription refills during regular business hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/Primary Care Doctor</td>
<td></td>
<td>Call this number for routine problems that are not a side effect of your cancer treatments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center Hospital Operator</td>
<td>(614) 293-8000</td>
<td>Call this number after 5pm on weekdays, weekends and holidays. The operator will page the doctor on-call.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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List other important numbers here:

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>(write in phone number)</th>
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