

Coughing



Réseau de
cancérologie
Rossy

Rossy
Cancer
Network

Symptom Management Tip Sheet

? Let's talk about coughing...

- Coughing is a natural reflex. It is your body's way of clearing your airway and protecting your lungs.
- A cough can happen for many reasons. Some can be simple, like a cold, allergies or smoking. This is not worrisome. But a cough can also be more serious. It can be related to the cancer, cancer treatments or an infection.
- Some coughs can be treated. Other times, the goal is to manage the cough to help you feel better and be able to enjoy your daily activities
- If you have shortness of breath, please refer to the *shortness of breath* tip sheet.
- **Advise your healthcare team** if you have a new cough, a persistent cough, if you cough up greenish yellow mucus, or if your cough gets worse.
- If you cough up blood and/or feel new pain the chest, **go to the emergency room or call your healthcare team immediately.**
- If you are undergoing chemotherapy and any of these types of pain are accompanied by a fever (temperature greater than 38°C), **go to the emergency room immediately.**

***If you are undergoing IMMUNOTHERAPY and have these symptoms please **contact your healthcare team as soon as possible.** Delays can increase side effects and toxicity.*



What you can do

- Ask your healthcare team if there are any treatments or medications that may help your cough.
- Ask your healthcare team if physiotherapy could improve your cough. A physiotherapist can show you the best way to clear your airways.
- Take a hot, steamy shower to loosen mucus.
- Try cough drops (ex: Halls, Cepacol, etc.) and/or a warm drink with honey.
- Try relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing.
- Use a humidifier in dry rooms.
- Drink a lot of fluids, which makes mucus in the throat thinner.
- Avoid smoking and breathing second-hand smoke.
- Avoid anything that triggers an allergic reaction.
- Avoid throat-irritating aerosol sprays like hairspray, deodorant, fragrances, and cleaning products.
- Do moderate physical activity such as yoga. This can help clear your airways (but avoid strenuous exercise).

Source : Physical, Emotional, and Social Effects of Cancer | Managing Physical Side Effects ©2021
Comprehensive information for people with cancer, their families, and caregivers, provided by the
American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO)

This information should not be considered as medical advice. It is not to be used in place of a visit with a doctor, nurse or other healthcare professional. If you have questions about your individual medical situation, please consult with your healthcare professional.

Other resources

Managing lung cancer symptoms - Cough

[https://www.lungcancercanada.ca/en-CA/Lung-Cancer/Screening-\(1\)/Managing-symptoms.aspx](https://www.lungcancercanada.ca/en-CA/Lung-Cancer/Screening-(1)/Managing-symptoms.aspx)

Supportive Care for Lung Cancer - Cough

<https://cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-types/lung/supportive-care>

More resources at

<https://www.mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient>

In your hospital

Symptom hotlines

Don't hesitate to call!

Hours of operation:
8AM to 4PM



MUHC: (514) 934-1934 ext. 34160

JGH: (514) 340-8222 ext. 25529

St. Mary's: (514) 734-2679 ext. 3622

❖ *If you have one please
speak to your IPO*