

Diarrhea



Réseau de
cancérologie
Rossy

Rossy
Cancer
Network

Symptom Management Tip Sheet

Let's talk about diarrhea...



- Diarrhea is an abnormal increase in stool liquidity and frequency.
- If you have diarrhea and a fever (temperature greater than 38°C), **PLEASE CONTACT YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM IMMEDIATELY.**
- If you have black stool or blood in your stool, **GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM.**
- If your diarrhea is intolerable, you have abdominal or rectal pain, you feel weak and dizzy, you have dark urine, or are urinating less, please contact your healthcare team.
- If you're having a hard time keeping down liquids, please call your hospital's symptom hotline (see bottom right corner).

** If you are undergoing IMMUNOTHERAPY and have any diarrhea at all, please contact your healthcare team as soon as possible. Delays can increase side effects and toxicity.*



What you can do

- Drink 6-8 glasses per day.
- Try eating 5-6 small meals.
- Avoid foods that can worsen diarrhea, such as: greasy/fried foods, spicy foods, alcohol, too much fruit juice or sweetened fruit drinks, raw vegetables, whole grain bread, nuts, popcorn, fruit skins, seeds, legumes, very hot or cold foods/fluids, sorbitol in sugar-free candy, lactose (in milk, cheese, yoghurt).
- Some foods that can lessen diarrhea: applesauce, oatmeal, bananas, barley, cooked carrots, rice, white toast, plain pasta, well-cooked eggs, skinless chicken, mashed potatoes, and fruit without skin.
- Replace lost electrolytes with bananas, potatoes, or sports drinks such as Gatorade, etc.



Other Considerations

- Speak to your healthcare team about medications you may be taking that can cause or worsen your diarrhea.
- Make sure to keep the skin around your rectum or ostomy clean to avoid skin breakdown.
- Carefully plan outings. Carry a change of clothes, know the location of restrooms, and use absorbent underwear.
- Keep record of the number of times a day you have diarrhea in order to inform your healthcare team.
- Speak to your healthcare team or pharmacist about medication that might help lessen your diarrhea.
- Speak to a dietitian for advice.

Based on: Remote Symptom Practice Guides for Adults on Cancer Treatments © 2020 D Stacey for the Pan-Canadian Oncology Symptom Triage and Remote Support (COSTaRS) Team. University of Ottawa School of Nursing and the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute, Ottawa, Canada.

Other resources

Diarrhea Causes By Meds

<http://bit.ly/bccancer-medsdiarrhea>

Managing Diarrhea

<https://bit.ly/ccco-diarrhea>

More resources at

mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient

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.

Who can help



Nurse Navigator (IPO)

If you have one, please speak with your IPO

Oncology Pharmacy

514-340-8222 ext. 25940

Dietitian

Ask your doctor or nurse for a referral

If you are getting treatment at:

▪ Oncology Clinic, call:

Symptom Management Hotline

514-340-8222 ext. 25529

Mon – Fri. 8h00-16h00

Nights/Weekends: 514-340-8232

▪ Radiation Oncology Clinic, call:

514-340-8222 ext. 24124