

Reduce Your Risk of Infection



When cancer and cancer treatments such as chemotherapy weaken your immune system, it's important to do everything you can to help your body's natural defenses against infection.^{1,2}

In addition to working with your doctor, here are some of the things you can do to help reduce your risk for infection by making simple changes to your daily routine:

A low white blood cell count, also known as neutropenia, can increase your risk for getting an infection. These infections can become serious or life-threatening if not found and treated early.²

More than

60,000 people

with cancer are hospitalized with neutropenia each year in the U.S.³



The average length of stay for such a hospitalization is approximately

10 days.⁴



Practice Good Hygiene

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water
- Take a shower or bath daily; use lotion to prevent dry and cracked skin
- Brush your teeth twice each day using a soft toothbrush
- Use disinfectant wipes to clean high-touch surfaces



Make Healthy Choices

- The CDC recommends getting an annual flu shot
- Cook meat and eggs thoroughly to kill any germs
- Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly before eating
- Wear gloves when doing household chores



Consider Your Environment

- Avoid close contact with sick people
- Limit your exposure to community spaces such as swimming pools and salons
- Avoid large crowds
- Don't share food, utensils, or makeup

These small lifestyle changes may help reduce your risk of infection.¹

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References:

1. Watching for and preventing infections. American Cancer Society website. <https://www.cancer.org/treatment/treatments-and-side-effects/physical-side-effects/low-blood-counts/infections/preventing-infections-in-people-with-cancer.html>. Accessed March 14, 2024. 2. What you need to know: Neutropenia and risk for infection. National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. <https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/preventinfections/pdf/neutropenia.pdf>. Accessed March 14, 2024. 3. Rasmy A, Amal A, Fotih S, Selwi W. Febrile neutropenia in cancer patient: epidemiology, microbiology, pathophysiology and management. *J Cancer Prev Curr Res*. 2016;5(3):00165. doi:10.15406/jcpr.2016.05.00165. Accessed March 14, 2024. 4. Tai E, Guy GP, Dunbar A, Richardson LC. Cost of Cancer-Related Neutropenia or Fever Hospitalizations, United States, 2012. *J Oncol Pract*. 2017 Jun;13(6):e552-e561. doi: 10.1200/JOP.2016.019588. Epub 2017 Apr 24. PMID: 28437150; PMCID: PMC5470648. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5470648/pdf/JOP.2016.019588.pdf>. Accessed March 14, 2024.