

Symptom Management For Lung Cancer

For those who suffer from lung cancer, or those undergoing cancer treatment, are possibly suffering from a wide range of symptoms that can make it extremely difficult to even get through the day.

It's imperative to manage these symptoms.

- Fatigue
- Neuropathy
- Anorexia
- Constipation
- Dyspnea (shortness of breath)

Fatigue

Are you feeling completely exhausted and tired? One of the most common and debilitating side effects and/or symptoms of cancer and the treatment of cancer is Chronic fatigue.

Below are some tips that may be of help:

- Make sure your daily goals are reachable and realistic. i.e. Pace yourself
- Keep some kind of an activity journal, the information can be extremely helpful. You'll be able to keep track of your energy/fatigue levels at specific times during the day and make note of the different types of activities. This will help you to identify the patterns in your day. Being able to identify these patterns will help you to plan your day so that you can keep these activities to a minimum.
- Don't make the mistake of overdoing it - get plenty of rest, if you don't follow this rule you'll be exhausted all the time.
- Ask for help with tasks when you need it. Don't be too proud to ask your family, friends, and even your neighbors for help.
- Try to eat plenty of small nourishing meals (sometimes it's best to eat small frequent meals), be sure to drink plenty of fluids.
- Talk to your doctor about your fatigue.

Neuropathy

If you've been diagnosed with lung cancer, there is a possibility that you may develop symptoms such as numbness or tingling in your fingers or toes, forgetfulness, dizziness, hearing loss, or constipation. The described symptoms can be caused by a condition called neuropathy. Neuropathy means there is something wrong with nerve tissue. Most people that are diagnosed with cancer will develop this condition. If you find that you have any of these symptoms you need to discuss them with your doctor.

Anorexia

Are you experiencing difficulty eating? Are you losing weight? Does food taste different to you?

If you said yes, below are some tips that may help:

- Eat foods that are at room temperature or cold, especially if you find yourself sensitive to odors.
- Try eating foods that you've never eaten before.
- Don't concern yourself with fat content or calories.

- Eat what tastes good and eat as much of that food as you like.
- Eat big at breakfast, especially if you find yourself to be more hungry in the mornings.
- Let someone else prepare your meals for you. This will keep you away from the cooking smells and help you conserve your energy.
- Don't worry too much about eating three meals. Snack throughout the day, and if you like, eat smaller amounts of food more often.
- Eat foods packed with calories. As an example, have a milk shake made with super high fat ice cream instead of just having a glass of milk. You can also add some protein powder to Jello and make milkshakes.
- Try to avoid having a beverage during your meals, they will contribute to feelings of fullness. Keep yourself hydrated by drinking between meals.
- Have a glass of beer or wine shortly before your meal, some times the alcohol can help you relax and help to increase your appetite.
- Try to do some light exercise, like taking a short walk about an hour or so before you eat. Exercise may help you to feel hungry.
- It's good to use food supplement products such as Sustacal, Ensure, and Isocal, they can help you get proper nutrition when you really can't eat. Again, you can try making a milkshakes with some ice cream and these products.
- Let your doctor know about your weight loss or appetite loss.

Constipation

Constipation is a common and often severe problem for those dealing with cancer. Here are some tips that may help:

- Try drinking at least eight to ten glasses of water each daily.
- Eating foods that contain high fiber. Some healthy options are fruits (particularly figs, prunes, dates, etc.) whole grain cereals, and lots of vegetables and nuts.
- Avoid foods like cheese and other types of dairy products.
- Avoid eating any type of fried foods, they can make you feel sick.
- Try to get as much exercise as you possibly can, even if it means only walking around your house or your garden.
- Maintain a normal environment if possible to maintain privacy, schedule of toileting.
- Drinking something warm about half an hour or so before you usually have your bowel-movements.
- Talk to your doctor about your constipation, he/she will probably help.

Dyspnea (Shortness of Breath)

It is common for people with lung cancer to have shortness of breath. By having a variety of activities you may help combat dyspnea including:

- Controlling your breathing.
- Do Abdominal Breathing.
- Try Relaxation techniques.

- Change the position of your body.
- Medications and Supplemental Oxygen are available, discuss this with your doctor.
- Inform your doctor about your dyspnea.

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About the Author

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