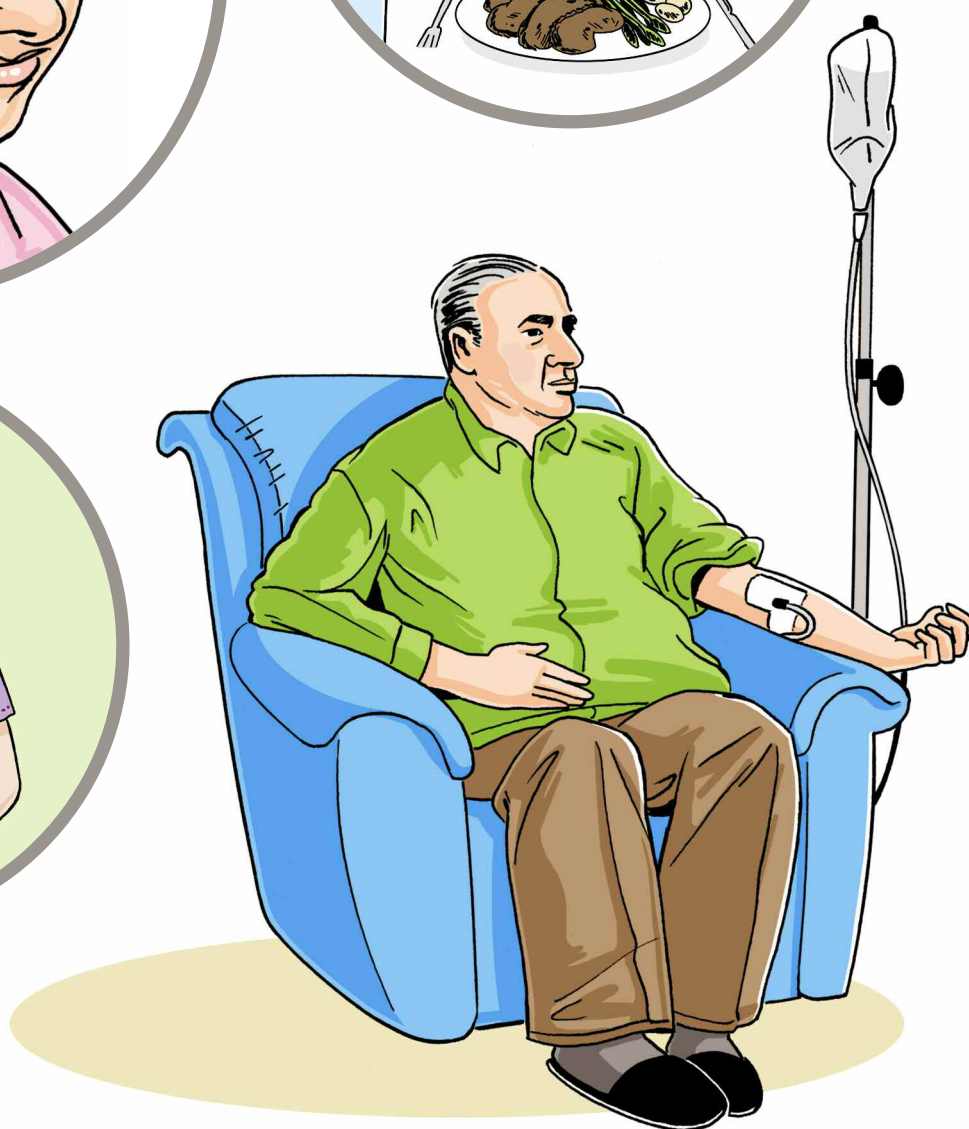


Side effects from chemotherapy

Diagnosis and Treatment



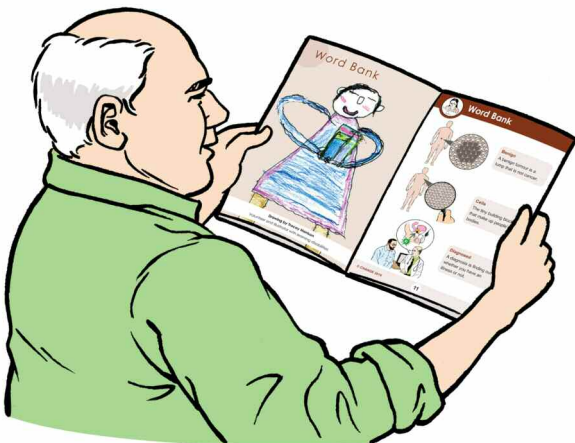
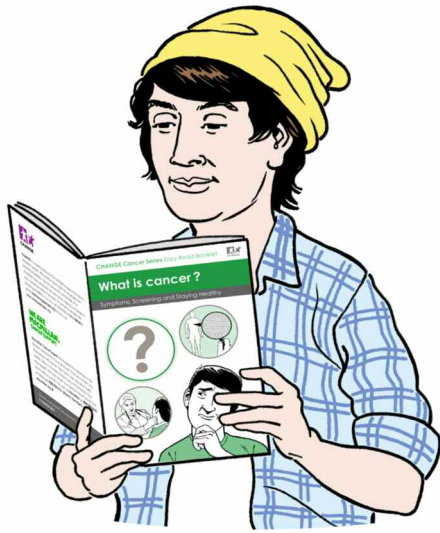
Introduction

This booklet uses easy words and pictures to help you get information about cancer.

You might want someone to help you look at the booklet so you can talk about it.

There is a Word Bank at the back of the booklet to help with hard words. Any words in **bold** you can find in the Word Bank.

This booklet can help you learn about cancer. But this is not the same as talking to your doctor. If you are worried about your health, you should talk to a doctor or nurse.





Side effects from chemotherapy



Some people worry about having **chemotherapy** because it can cause side effects that make you feel ill.

Side effects are things that happen because of your treatment.



Your doctor or nurse can tell you about what will happen if you choose not to have chemotherapy.

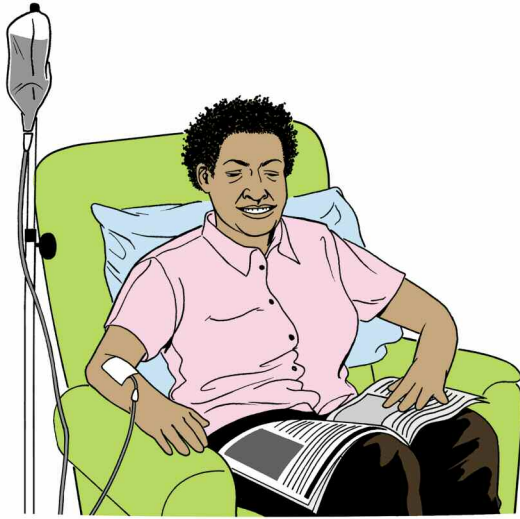


You can then decide if you want to have the treatment or not

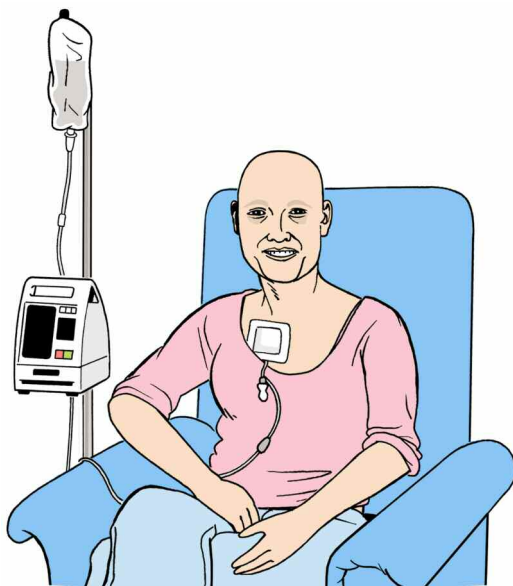


Side effects from chemotherapy

Side effect - Losing your hair



Some drugs don't change your hair very much.



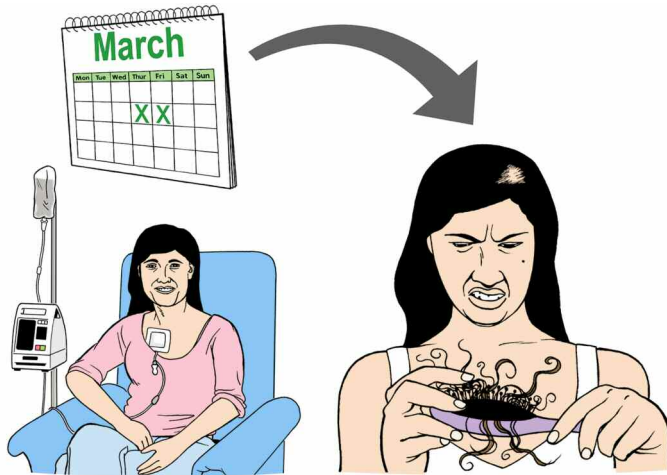
Other drugs can damage your hair or make it all fall out. This can be very upsetting.



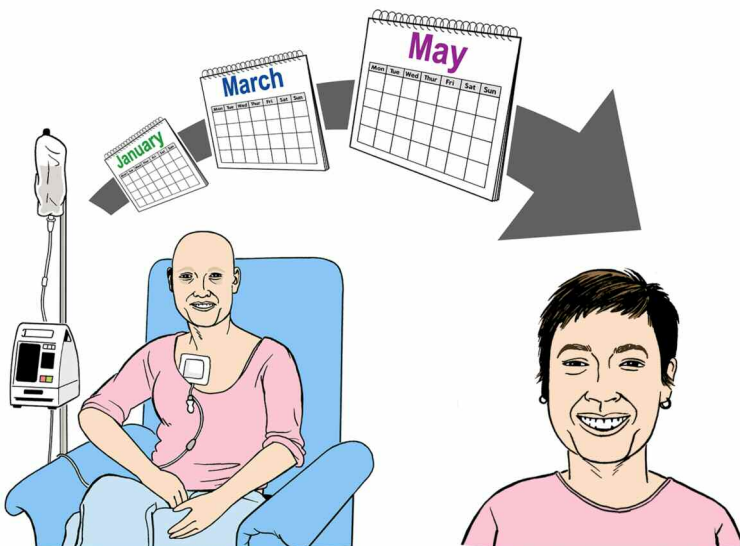
Sometimes these drugs can also make your body hair, like your armpit and **pubic hair**, fall out too.



Side effects from chemotherapy



If your hair falls out, this is usually after one or two treatments.



The good thing is that your hair will usually grow back after your treatment ends.

Losing your hair - what can help?



- Don't brush or comb your hair too roughly.



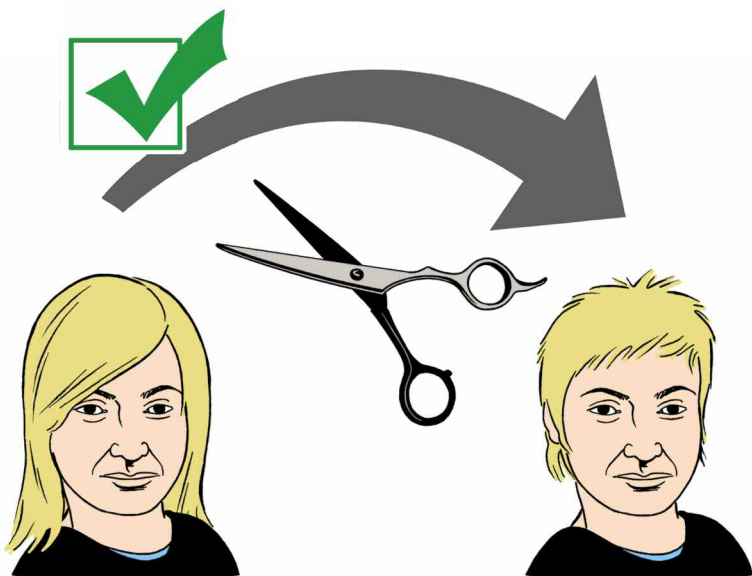
Side effects from chemotherapy



- If you want to dye your hair, check with your nurse first.



- Don't use a hair dryer, tongs or hair straighteners.



- You could cut your hair short. This is so the weight of it doesn't pull it out more quickly.



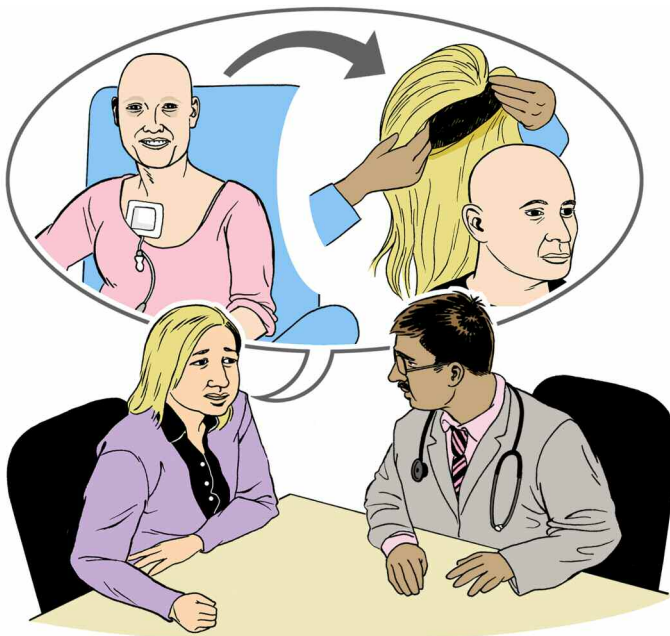
Side effects from chemotherapy



- There are special hats, scarves and turbans that you can wear.



- You could also wear a wig if you want to.



If your hair is going to fall out, ask the doctor or nurse about wigs before your treatment starts. They can get you a wig that is like your own hair colour.

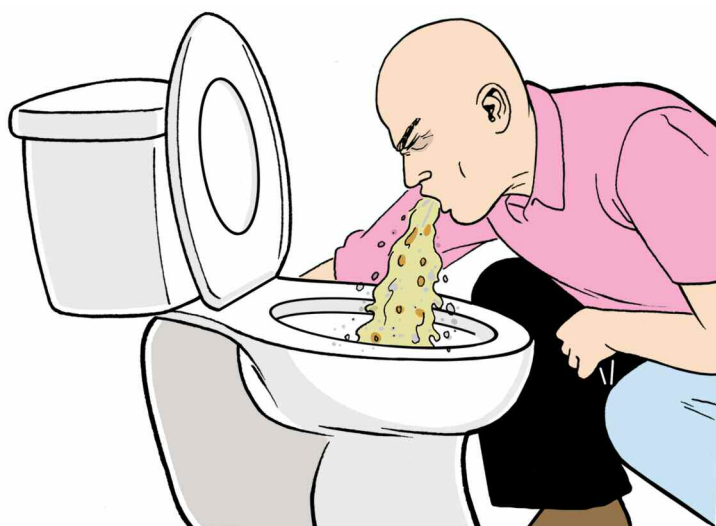


Side effects from chemotherapy

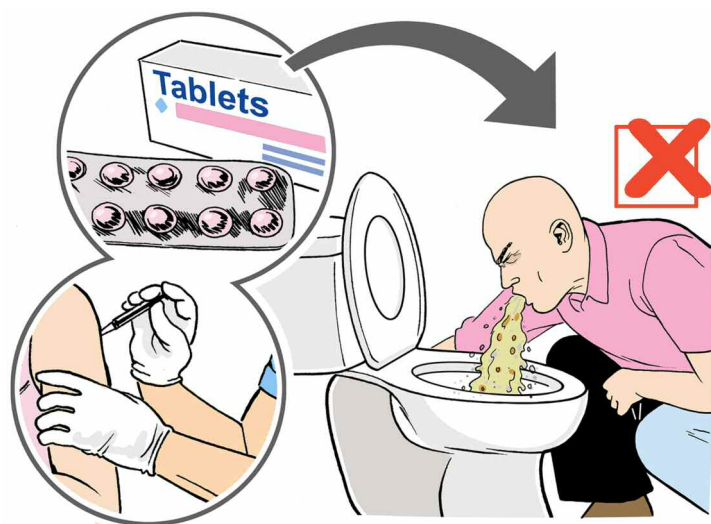
Side effect - Feeling sick or being sick



Some chemotherapy drugs can make you feel sick (**nausea**).



And some can make you be sick (**vomit**). Sickness may start a few minutes into your treatment, or a few hours later. It may last a long or short time.

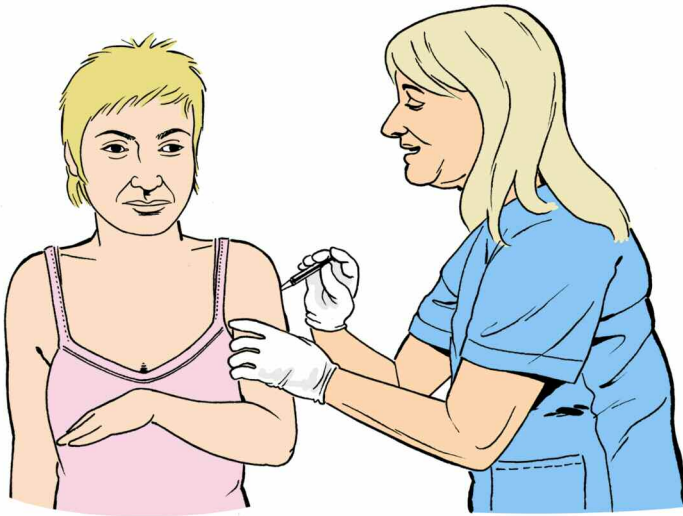


There are good treatments to help stop you feeling like this.



Side effects from chemotherapy

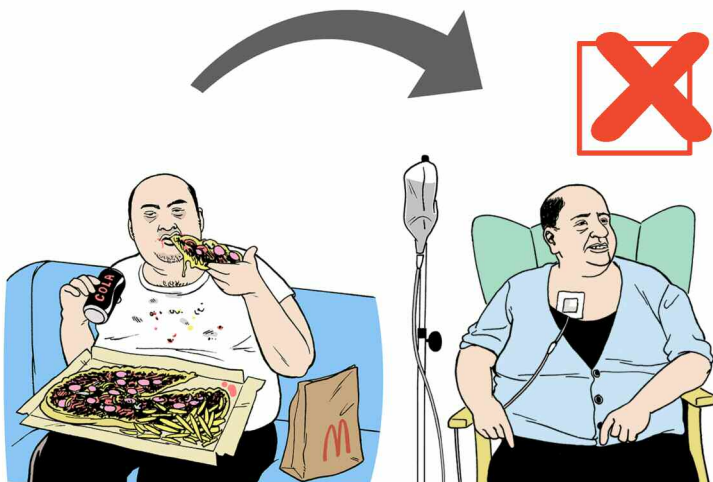
Feeling sick or being sick - what can help?



- To stop you feeling sick the doctor can give you **anti-sickness drugs** before you have your chemotherapy. This might be an injection or tablets.



- You can also get some tablets to take home in case you feel sick at other times.



- Try not to have a big meal just before your treatment.



Side effects from chemotherapy



- Don't eat fried food and strong smelling foods.



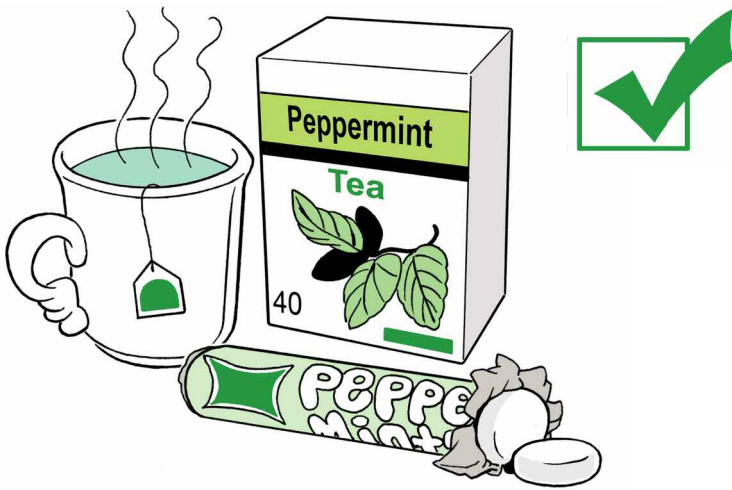
- Just eat small amounts of food you do like and feel OK eating.



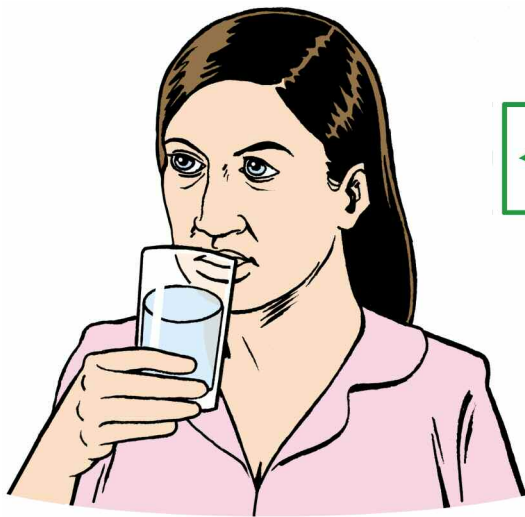
- Food and drinks with ginger in them can help you feel better. Try ginger tea or ginger biscuits.



Side effects from chemotherapy



- Peppermints or peppermint tea can also help.



- Make sure you try to drink lots of liquids. Sip them slowly.

Side effect - **Losing your appetite**



Chemotherapy drugs can make you want to eat less.

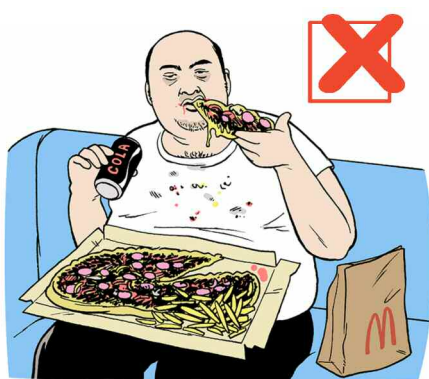


Side effects from chemotherapy

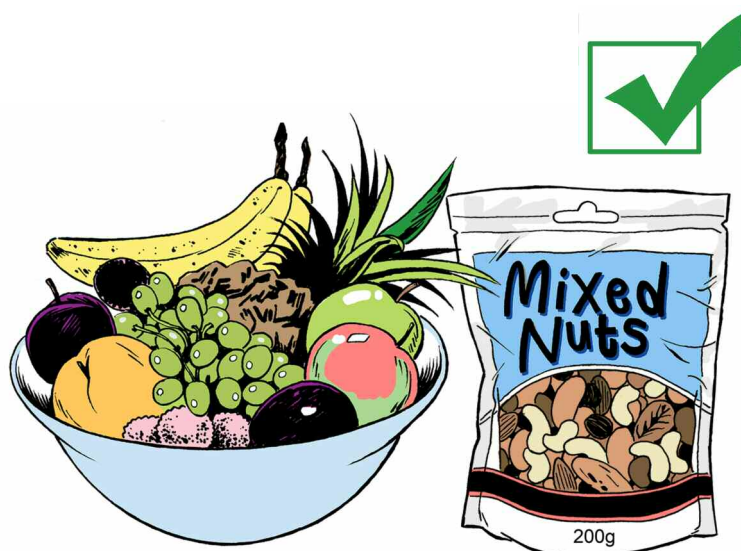


Even if you don't want to eat, it is important to eat something. Food will help you keep your strength and energy.

Losing your appetite - What can help?



- Eat small amounts more often instead of big meals.



- Eat healthy snacks like nuts or fruits.



Side effects from chemotherapy



- You can have special high energy drinks instead of some meals. Ask your **dietitian** about these.

Side effect - Problems going to the toilet



Some chemotherapy drugs can make your poo thin and watery (**diarrhoea**).



Some can make it hard to poo (**constipation**). Some anti-sickness drugs can do this too.



Side effects from chemotherapy

Problems going to the toilet

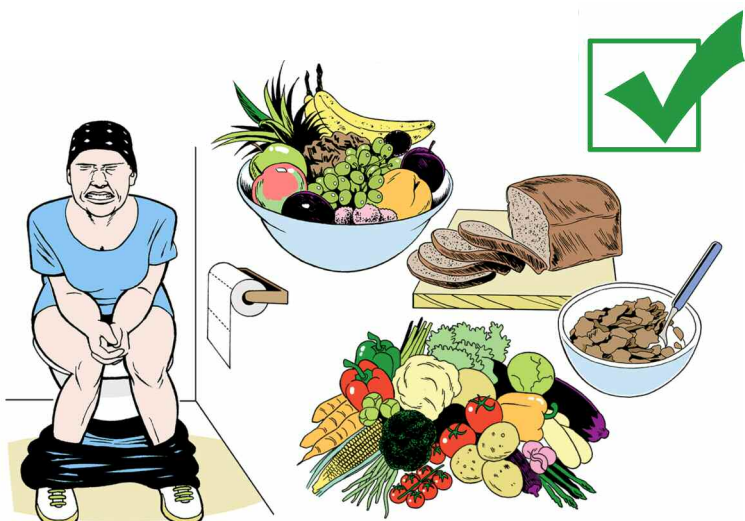
- What can help?



- If you have watery poo (diarrhoea) then you need to change what you are eating. Try not to eat cereals, raw fruits and vegetables.



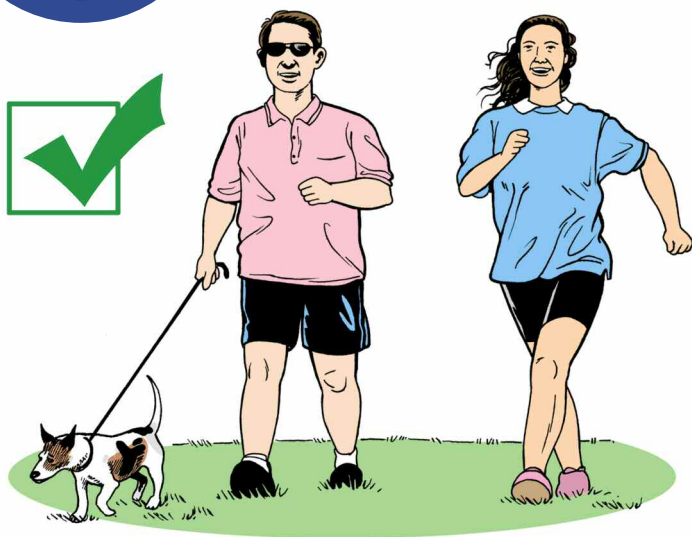
- Try to drink lots of liquids such as water.



- If you are finding it hard to poo (constipation), try to eat more fibre. Fibre is in brown bread, raw fruits and fruit juice, cereals and vegetables.



Side effects from chemotherapy



- Gentle exercise helps with constipation so try to have a walk every day.

Side effect - Your sense of taste



Chemotherapy can make your food and drink taste strange.



This will stop after your treatment ends.



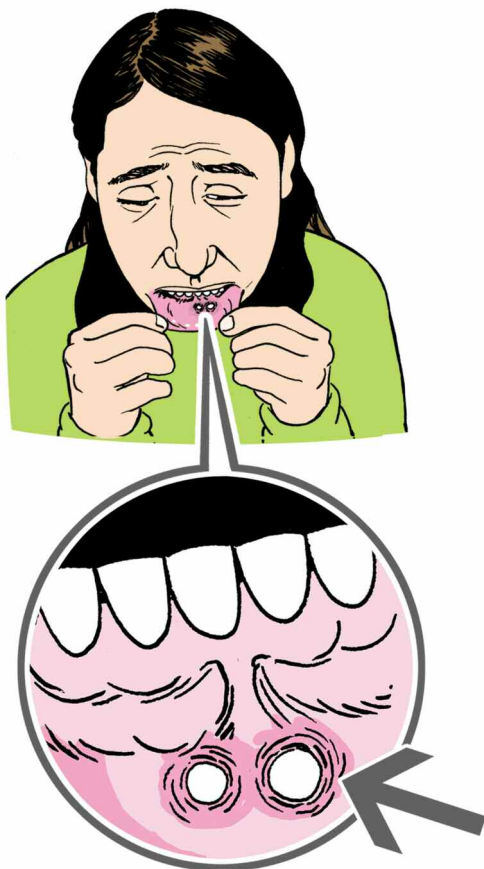
Side effects from chemotherapy

Your sense of taste - What can help?



Eat things that you like but try to eat healthy food.

Side effect - Your mouth



Some of the chemotherapy drugs can make your mouth sore and cause **mouth ulcers**. Mouth ulcers can get infected and be painful.



Side effects from chemotherapy

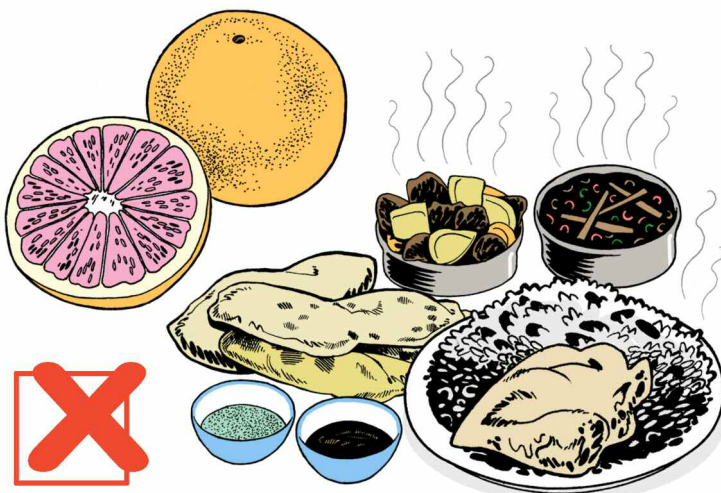
Your mouth - What can help?



- Tell your doctor if you have a sore mouth. They can give you mouthwashes, creams or gels. You can also rinse your mouth with salt water.



- Clean your teeth gently and often with a soft toothbrush.



- Don't eat foods and drinks that will hurt your mouth - like grapefruit or spicy food.

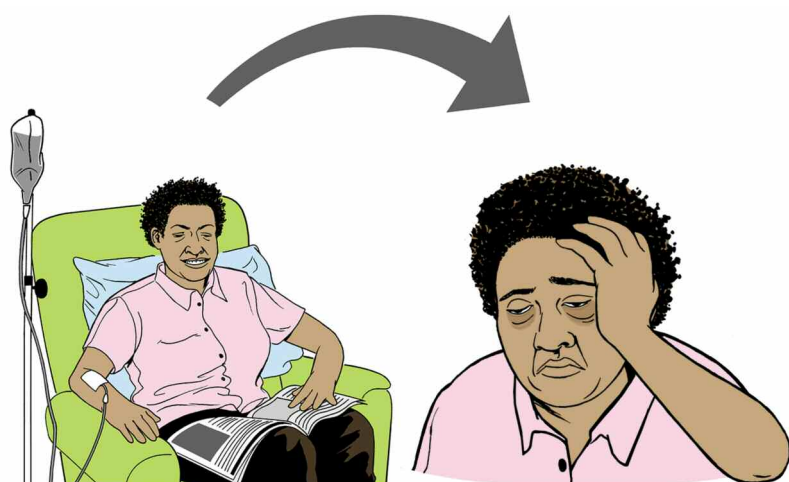


Side effects from chemotherapy



- Drink soothing drinks like herbal teas and water.

Side effect - Tiredness (Fatigue)



Chemotherapy can often make you feel very tired (**fatigue**).

Tiredness (Fatigue) - What can help?



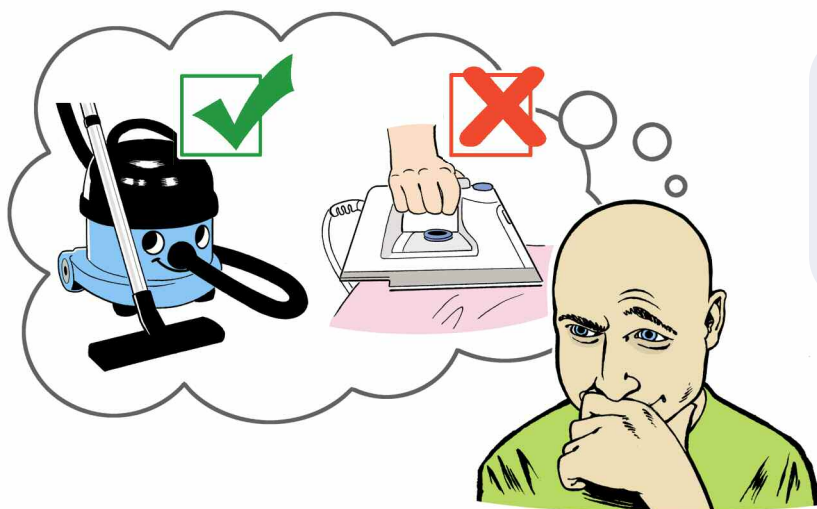
- Try to do a little bit of exercise every day. This will help you feel less tired.



Side effects from chemotherapy



- Rest as much as you can.



- Try to cut down the amount of things you have to do.



- Ask other people to help you do things.



Side effects from chemotherapy



When your treatment ends it may take a few months for you to feel less tired and get your normal energy back.

Side effect - Infection



When you are having chemotherapy you might get **infections** more easily, like a cold or flu.

Infection - What can help?



Here are some tips to help you avoid infections:

- Wash your hands often.



Side effects from chemotherapy



- Stay away from people who have colds or other illnesses you can catch.



- Stay away from places with lots of people.

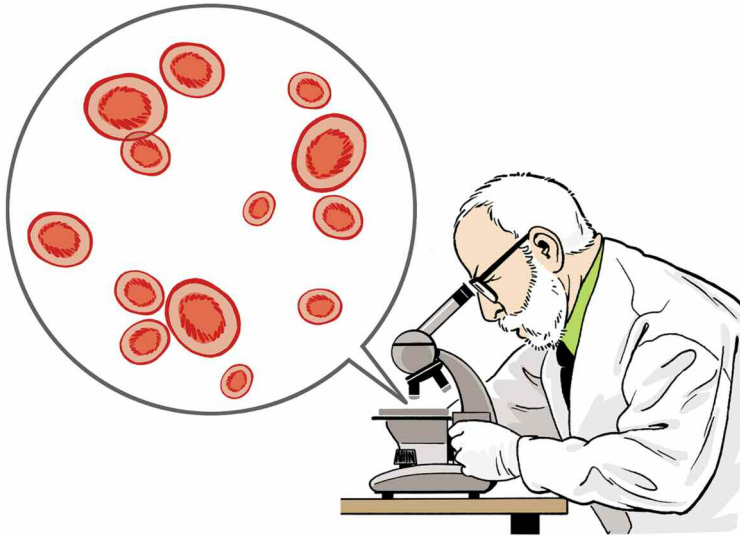


It is very important to tell your doctor if you feel hot and ill so that they can give you medicine.



Side effects from chemotherapy

Side effect - Anaemia



Anaemia can happen when your blood doesn't have enough red blood **cells** in it.



- Anaemia can make you feel very tired and out of breath.



- Anaemia can make you feel dizzy.



Side effects from chemotherapy

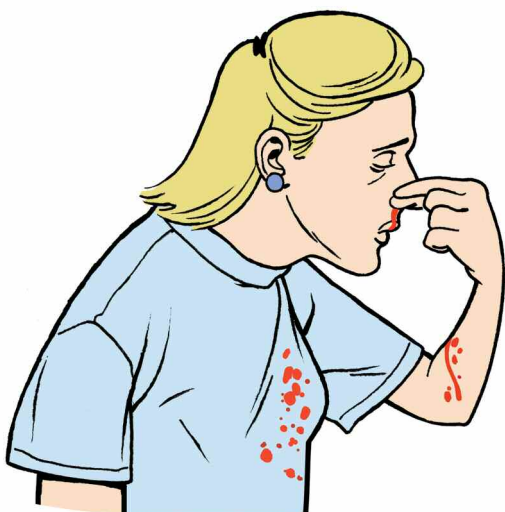


- Anaemia can also make your joints and muscles ache.



- Your doctor can treat you for anaemia.

Side effect - **Bleeding and bruising**



If you have nosebleeds or bleeding gums.



Side effects from chemotherapy



Or if bruises appear on your body for no reason.



It is very important to see your doctor or the hospital straight away.

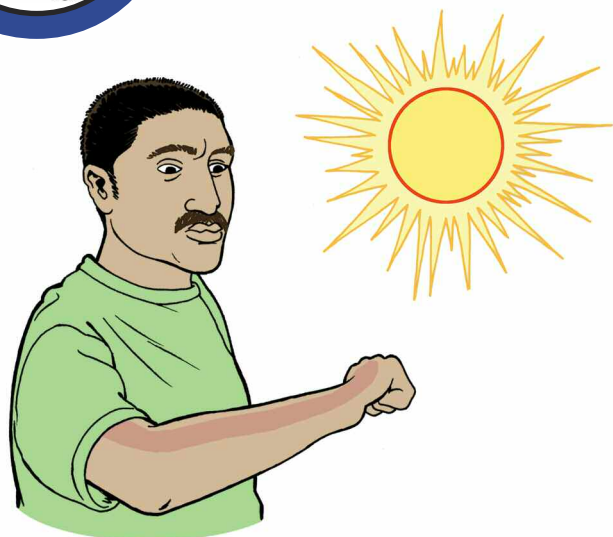
Side effect - Changes to your skin and nails



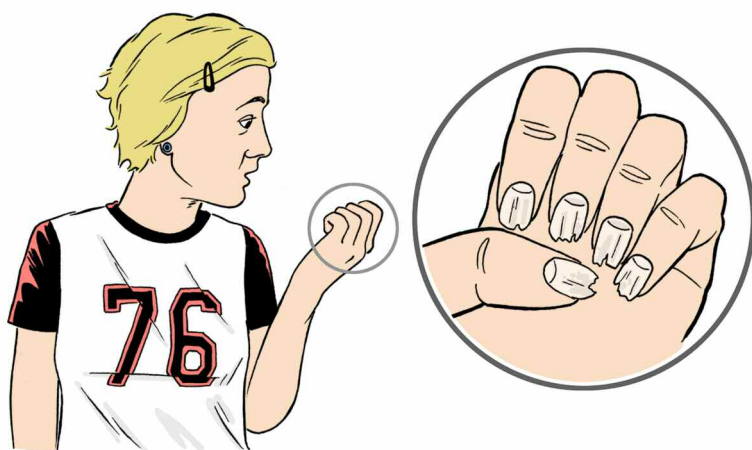
Chemotherapy drugs can change your skin and nails. Your skin can become dry and itchy.



Side effects from chemotherapy



Your skin can become more sensitive to the sun.



Your nails may change colour and break more easily.

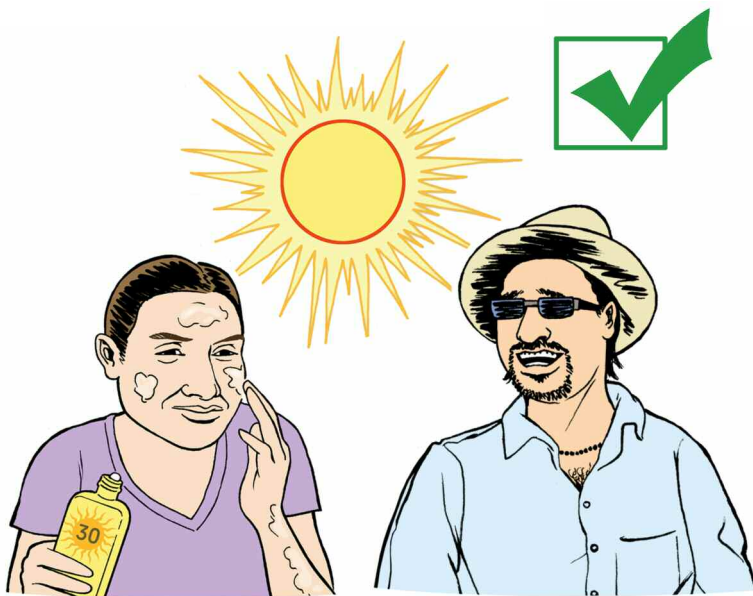
Changes to your skin and nails - What can help?



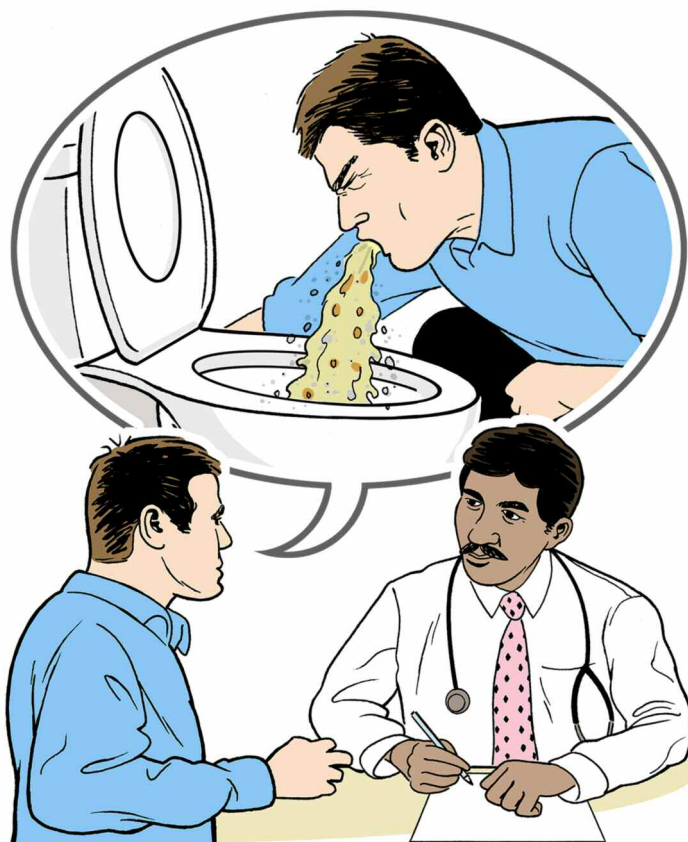
- Use moisturising cream on dry and flaky skin.



Side effects from chemotherapy



- Protect yourself in the sun by using high protection sun cream. You should also wear a hat and loose clothes with long sleeves.



There are other side effects that can happen because of chemotherapy treatment.

If you feel unwell in any way, talk to your doctor or nurse. They can help you with side effects.

Word Bank

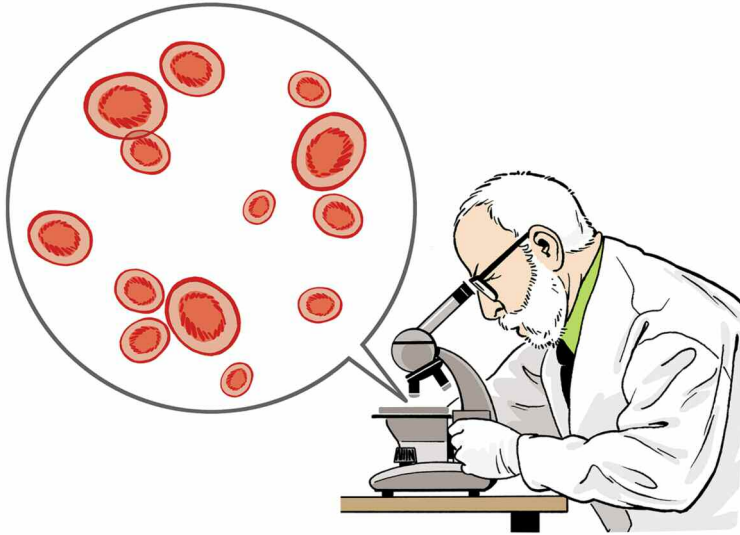


Drawing by Tracey Harrison

Volunteer and Illustrator with learning disabilities

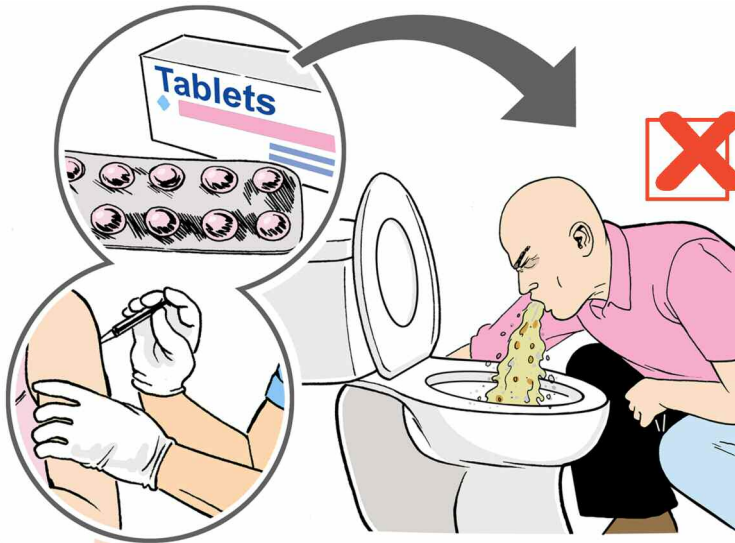


Word Bank



Anaemia

This is when your body doesn't have enough red blood cells. It makes you feel tired and weak.



Anti-sickness drugs

These are drugs that can help stop you feeling sick.

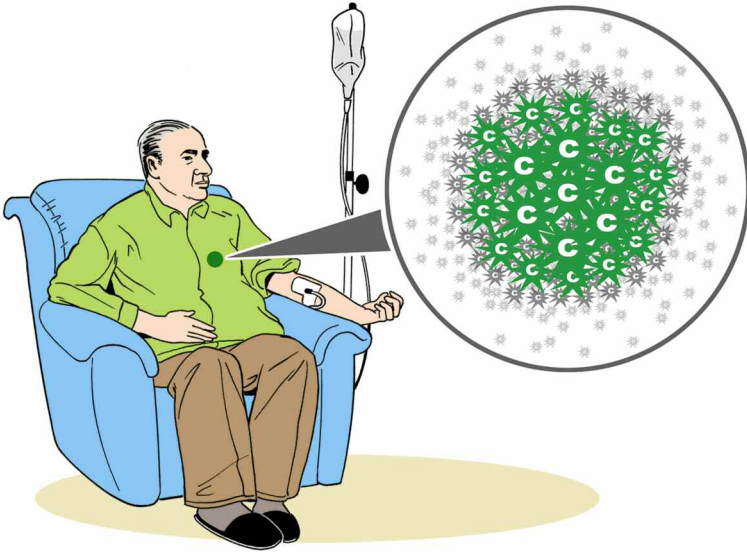


Appetite

This is the feeling you get when you want food.

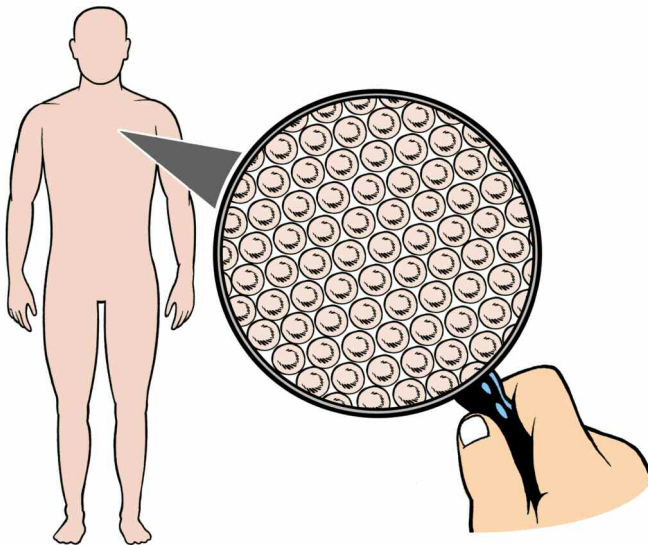


Word Bank



Chemotherapy

This is a type of treatment where you are given drugs to help kill cancer cells in your body.



Cells

The tiny building blocks that make up people's bodies.

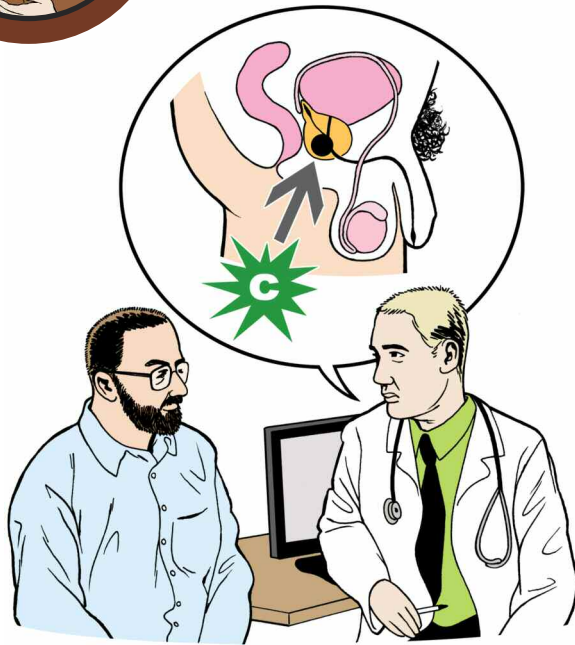


Constipation

Finding it hard to have a poo.



Word Bank



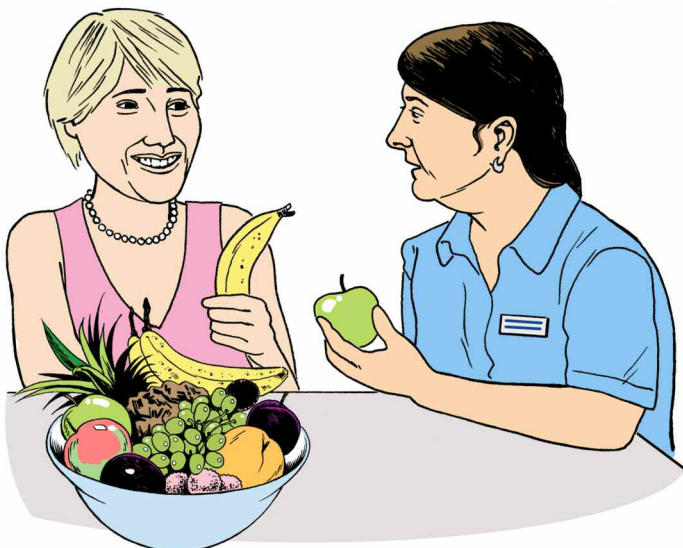
Diagnosis

A diagnosis is finding out whether you have an illness or not.



Diarrhoea

This is when your poo is watery and runny, and you need to go more than usual.

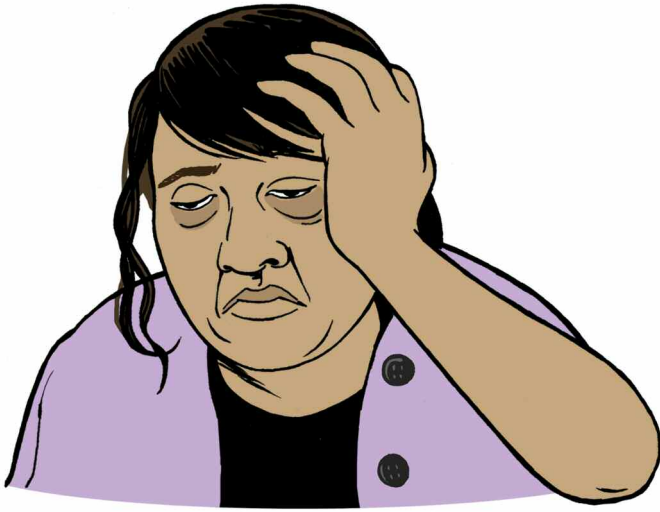


Dietitian

A dietitian knows about food and diet. They can help with any problems with eating and food.

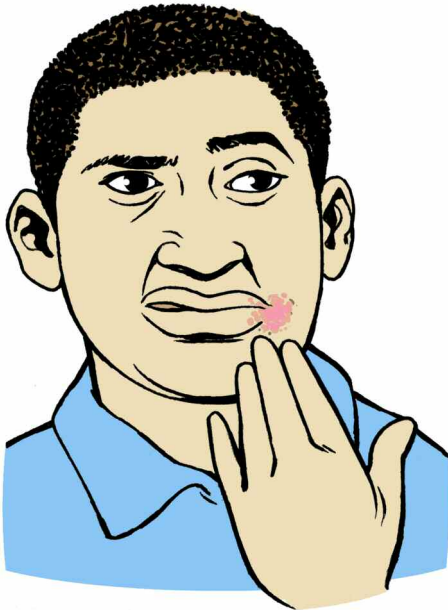


Word Bank



Fatigue

When you feel very tired and have no energy.



Infection

An infection is when your body is attacked by a bacteria or virus. Infections cause you harm and might make you feel unwell.



Mouth ulcers

These are painful round sores in your mouth, usually on the inside of your cheeks or lips.

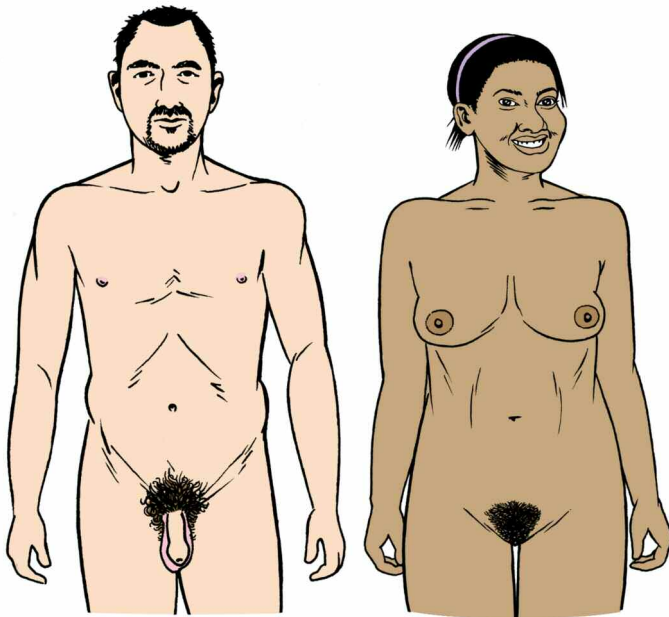


Word Bank



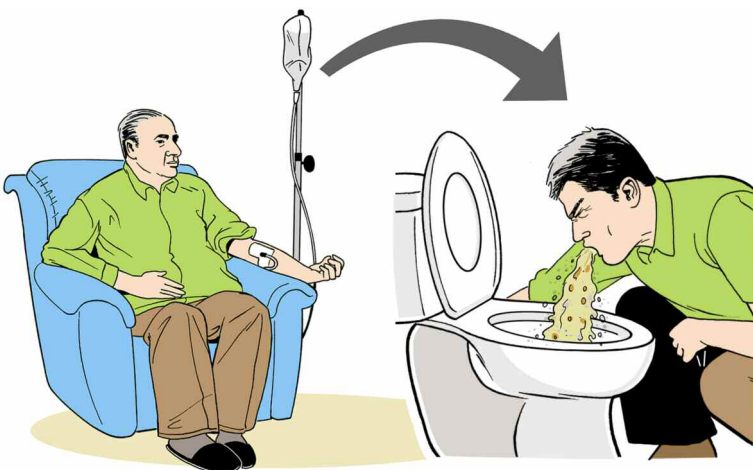
Nausea

This is when you get the feeling you want to be sick. You can also feel dizzy too.



Pubic hair

This is the hair that grows on the private parts of your body.

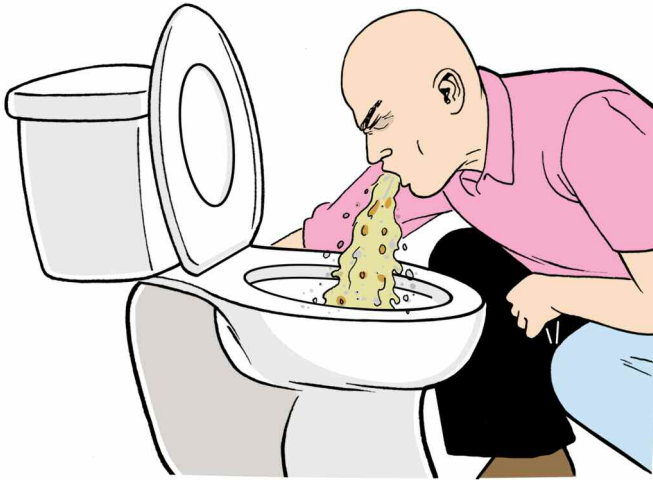


Side effects

These are things that happen because of your treatment, such as feeling tired or sick.



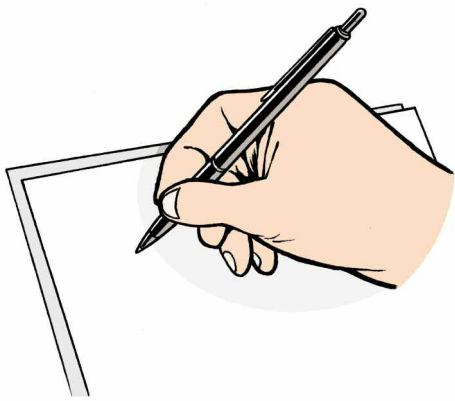
Word Bank



Vomit

This means to be sick.

Notes...



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Useful contacts



Drawing by Tracey Harrison

Volunteer and Illustrator with learning disabilities



Useful contacts

Helpful organisations

Cancer Research UK

A charity that is researching treatments for cancer. Its website has lots of information about cancer.

Phone: 0808 800 4040

Web: www.cancerresearchuk.org



Macmillan Cancer Support

A charity that helps people who have cancer. They give practical, medical and financial support. They try to make cancer care in the UK better.

Phone: 0808 808 00 00

Web: www.macmillan.org.uk

NHS Contacts

These contacts give you information about your health and health services:

England and Scotland **Phone: 111**

Wales **Phone: 0845 46 47**

Northern Ireland **Web: www.hscni.net**

Paul's Cancer Support Centre

Gives help, information and complementary therapies to people with cancer.

Phone: 0207 924 3924

Web: www.paulscancersupportcentre.org.uk



Useful contacts

RESPOND

Gives therapy to people with learning disabilities after trauma or abuse. They also offer training and support to carers.

Phone: 0808 808 07 00

Web: www.respond.org.uk

Written and audio material

Books Beyond Words

A series of picture books for people with learning disabilities. The books talk about cancer, health and bereavement.

Web: www.booksbeyondwords.co.uk

Phone: 020 8877 9799

Email: admin@booksbeyondwords.co.uk

FAIR Multimedia

Publishes a range of health leaflets, audio discs and CDs for people with learning disabilities. This includes a series on cancer.

Email: fair@fairadvice.org.uk

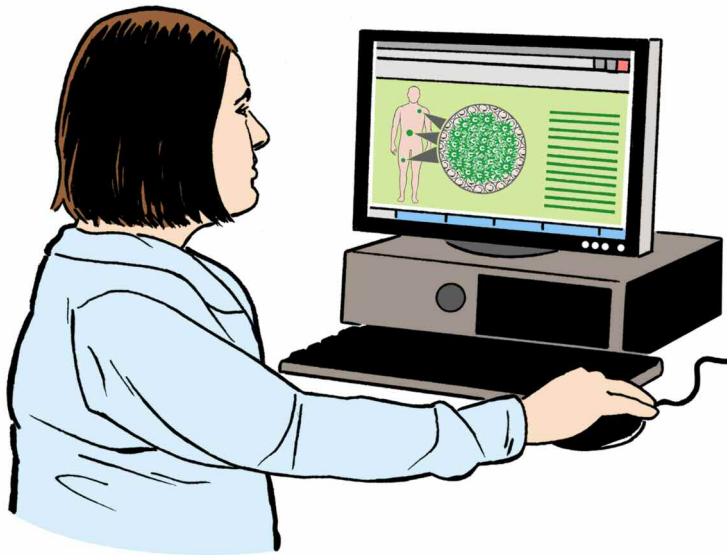
Phone: 0131 662 1962

Web: www.fairadvice.org.uk/health-publications.php



Useful contacts

Online help



www.easyhealth.org.uk

Has lots of online health information that is easy to understand.

www.macmillan.org.uk

Has lots of information about cancer and where to get help. You can also talk to other people with cancer in the online community.

Videos and DVDs

Leeds Animation Workshop

Has animated films on social issues for people with learning disabilities. There is one called 'Getting Better' about going to the doctor and the health clinic.

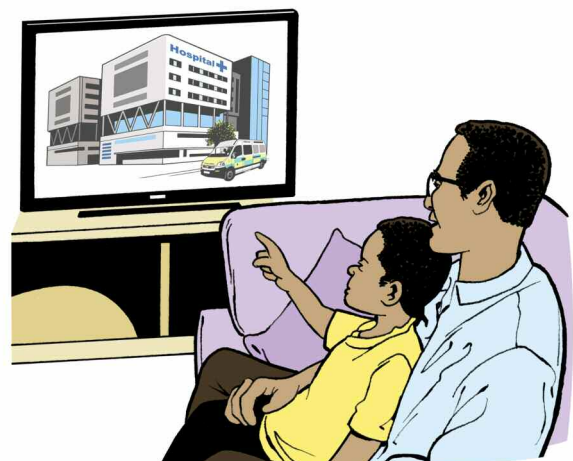
Phone: 0113 248 4997

Web: www.leedsanimation.org.uk/index.html

Speak Up Self Advocacy

Has DVDs and booklets for people with learning disabilities about health and illness.

Web: www.speakup.org.uk





CHANGE is a leading national Human Rights organisation led by disabled people. We work for equal rights for all people with learning disabilities. The cancer books and booklets that CHANGE have produced are part of an ongoing campaign to raise awareness about the issues of cancer for people with learning disabilities. You can call CHANGE on **0113 242 6619**, email **info@changepeople.org** or find us at **www.changepeople.org**

WE ARE MACMILLAN. CANCER SUPPORT

Macmillan Cancer Support has reviewed the information in this booklet and paid for it to be produced. They are a charity who help people with cancer. They have nurses and other health workers. They try to make cancer care in the UK better. They have experts who can answer your questions about cancer and how it affects your life. You can call **Macmillan** on **0808 808 00 00** or textphone **0808 808 0121 (Mon–Fri, 9am–8pm)**. Or go to **macmillan.org.uk**

This easy read booklet was produced by CHANGE

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