

# Feelings of Anxiety



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## Symptom Management Tip Sheet

### Let's talk about anxiety...



- It is normal to feel some anxiety and to worry about your diagnosis, treatment or side effects. Please share these concerns with your healthcare team.
- Anxiety is a feeling of nervousness, concern, and worry.
- Anxiety can impact your ability to make decisions, follow treatment, function normally, and affect your overall quality of life.
- Call your healthcare team for extra help if you cannot sleep or function normally.
- If you are having a panic attack, or your throat is tightening or you have trouble breathing, **go to the Emergency Room.**
- If you are having thoughts of harming yourself or others, **call 911 immediately** or call the Montreal **Suicide Action line 1-866-277-3553**



### What you can do

- Talk to someone you trust.
- Do some gentle exercise, like yoga.
- Try relaxation therapy, like breathing techniques and listening to music.
- Do what feels right for you. Everyone copes differently.
- Don't hesitate to call your healthcare team if you're worried about your diagnosis, treatment, or symptoms or you need more information.



### Other considerations

- Joining a support group can be very helpful.
- Speaking with mental health counsellors for help with managing stress and problem-solving is often a good idea.
- Doing spiritual activities, like spiritual counseling, prayer and meditation can help reduce anxiety.
- Talk-based therapies like Cognitive Behavioural Therapy or mindfulness-based stress reduction can also help.

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### Other resources

#### Managing Anxiety

<https://bit.ly/cco-anxiety>

#### Managing Stress

<https://bit.ly/bccancer-stressmgmt>

#### Emotional Effects of Cancer

<https://bit.ly/cancer-emotions>

#### Information Videos

<https://bit.ly/cancer-videos>

#### More at

[mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient](http://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. 5

#### Psychosocial Oncology

**JGH:** (514) 340-8222 ext. 23223

**St. Mary's:** (514) 345-3511 ext. 6679

**MUHC Social Work:** (514) 934-1934 ext. 31569

**MUHC Spiritual Care:** (514) 934-1934 ext. 34163

#### For more information:

**MUHC: Cedars CanSupport**

(514) 934-1934 ext. 35297

**JGH: Hope & Cope**

(514) 514-340-8255

**St. Mary's:** Contact CanSupport or Hope & Cope

# Appetite Loss



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## Symptom Management Tip Sheet



### Let's talk about appetite loss...

- Appetite loss is when you lack feelings of hunger. Though you may not feel like eating, it is important to try to reach your calorie, protein, and liquid needs.
- If you are concerned that you are not eating well or not eating enough, speak to your healthcare team.
- Ask your healthcare team how carefully you need to follow your specific dietary plan.



### What you can do

Try eating 5-6 small meals.

Sit upright for 30-60 minutes after eating to help with digestion.

If odors bother you, try foods that are cold, with less smell.

Try cooking with fewer spices (onion, garlic, or condiments that might bother you) until you can tolerate them.

Eat more when you feel most hungry.

Eat foods that are higher in protein and calories (such as eggs, nuts, meat)

Drink high energy/protein drinks (Ensure, Glucerna).

Stay active (try walking 15-20 minutes 1-2 times/day).



### Additional help

- If getting groceries and preparing meals is difficult, try buying pre-prepared food or making a large amount of food and freezing it in smaller portions.
- Ask friends/family for help.
- Consult with a dietician. They may be able to recommend new strategies.

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### Other resources

#### Food and Meal ideas

<https://bit.ly/bccancer-appetite>

#### Taking Care During Chemo

<https://bit.ly/cancer-chemocare>

#### Managing Appetite Loss

<https://bit.ly/cco-appetite>

#### More resources at

[mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient](http://mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient)

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#### Dietitian

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# Bleeding



## Symptom Management Tip Sheet

### Let's talk about bleeding...



- Bleeding refers to loss of blood or bruising. This can happen for different reasons, such as low platelets from chemotherapy.
- **Call your healthcare team immediately** if you have ANY new bleeding, bleeding you can't control, or new/large bruising. This is especially important if you have a fever (temperature greater than 38°C).
- If you have a nose bleed longer than 10 minutes, or there is blood in your vomit, or you have to change a sanitary pad more than once per hour, **go to the Emergency Room.**



### What you can do

Try applying direct pressure for 10-15 minutes when the bleeding occurs.

Try using ice packs to slow the bleed.

If you have a dressing and bleeding occurs when it is changed, please tell your nurse.

If you might be at risk for bleeding due to chemotherapy or blood thinner medication, use a soft toothbrush and avoid razors to lower your risk of bleeding.

Avoid taking suppositories.

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### Medication

Speak to your healthcare team about medications you are taking that may affect bleeding.

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### Other resources

General information at  
[mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient](http://mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient)

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#### Oncology Pharmacy

**MUHC:**

514-934-1934 ext. 34121

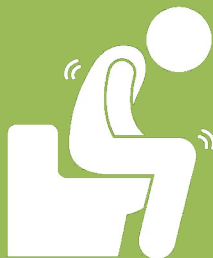
**JGH:**

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# Constipation



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## Symptom Management Tip Sheet

### Let's talk about constipation...



- Constipation is a decrease in bowel movements from your regular bowel movement schedule (usually, less than 3 bowel movements per week).
- It is often described by difficult passage of stools and stools that are hard.
- If your constipation is accompanied by a fever (temperature greater than 38°C) and/or nausea and vomiting, or abdominal pain, please **contact your healthcare team immediately**.
- If you have not had a bowel movement in 3 days, no passing of gas in 24 hours, and your stomach is bloated, please **contact your healthcare team**.



### What you can do

Try to use the toilet 30-60 minutes after meals.  
Drink fluids, about 6-8 glasses per day, especially warm or hot fluids.  
Limit your use of caffeine or alcohol.  
Slowly increase fiber intake to 25 grams per day.  
Eat fruits that can reduce constipation (dates, prunes, prune nectar, figs).  
Stay as active as possible (try walking 20-30 minutes, 3-5 times per week).

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### Other considerations

- Use a private toilet and avoid bedpans if possible.
- Avoid suppositories and enemas.
- Ask your healthcare team about any medications you may be taking that can cause or worsen your constipation.
- Ask your pharmacist or healthcare team about taking laxatives.

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### Other resources

#### Managing Constipation

<https://bit.ly/cco-constipation>

#### Constipation Caused by Meds

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

#### Relieving Constipation (video)

<https://bit.ly/youtube-constipation>

#### More resources at

[mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient](http://mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient)

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#### Pharmacist

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#### Dietitian

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# Feelings of Depression



## Symptom Management Tip Sheet



### Let's talk about depression...

- Depression can include a range of feelings like sadness, despair, hopelessness, loss of interest, irritable mood, changes in sleep patterns, loss of appetite, and difficulty making decisions
- If you are having thoughts of harming yourself or others, **call 911 immediately** or the **Montreal Suicide Action line 1-866-277-3553**



### What you can do

Consider speaking to a mental health professional for further help.

Talk to someone you trust. Consider using your support group(s) and/or family/friends to help you out.

Try relaxation therapy, guided imagery or creative therapies.

Consider getting extra help from counselling or programs with talk therapy (like Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction).

If your concerns are spiritual, try spiritual counselling, such as focused meditation, prayer, worship or other spiritual activities.

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### Other resources

#### Managing Depression

<https://bit.ly/cco-depression>

#### What is Depression (video)

<https://bit.ly/youtube-depression>

#### More resources at

[mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient](http://mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient)

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**St. Mary's:** Contact CanSupport or Hope & Cope

# Diarrhea



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



### 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.

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### Other resources

#### Diarrhea Causes By Meds

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

#### Managing Diarrhea

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

#### More resources at

[mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient](http://mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient)

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#### Pharmacist

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#### Dietitian

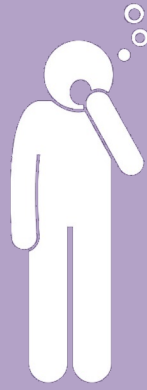
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# Fatigue / Tiredness



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## Symptom Management Tip Sheet

### Let's talk about fatigue/tiredness...



- Fatigue/tiredness is the most common symptom of cancer and the most common side-effect of cancer treatment.
- Fatigue/tiredness can feel like constant and heavy exhaustion. It feels like you have less energy and lower ability to focus.
- It is not the same as being tired at the end of the day. It is not relieved by rest, and can interfere with your usual activities.
- **Call your healthcare team immediately**, if you have a sudden increase or unusual fatigue or weakness in the legs



### What you can do

Use a diary to track your fatigue patterns to help with planning your activities.  
Save energy for things that are important to you.  
Listen to your body and rest when you need to.  
Make sure you are eating/drinking enough to meet your body's energy needs.  
Stay as active as possible (try walking 20-30 minutes, 3-5 times per week).  
Ask for support from family and friends.

Try activities to make you more relaxed (e.g. relaxation therapy, meditation, deep breathing, or guided imagery).  
Ask your healthcare team about trying home-based white light therapy.  
For tips on improving your sleep, please refer to the "Sleep Changes" tip sheet.  
Ask your healthcare team for a referral for help with fatigue (e.g. rehabilitation specialist or occupational therapist).

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### Other resources

#### Managing Fatigue

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

#### Fatigue and Chemo (video)

<https://bit.ly/cancer-chemocare>

#### Managing your Energy (video)

<https://bit.ly/youtube-fatigue>

#### More resources at

[mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient](http://mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient)

### In your hospital

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# Mouth Dryness



## Symptom Management Tip Sheet



### Let's talk about Mouth Dryness...

- Mouth dryness is when you have less saliva than normal and/or thicker saliva than you normally do.
- This can happen because of chemotherapy, radiation or medications.



### What you can do

- Drink clear fluids, 6-8 glasses per day.
- Try using a bland mouth rinse 4 times per day. Recipe: 1 cup warm water, ½ tsp table salt (or baking soda). Swish in your mouth for at least 30 seconds and spit out.
- If you are having a hard time swallowing, try to eat a soft diet (e.g. oatmeal, bananas, applesauce, pasta, eggs, etc.).
- Keep your mouth cool and moist with fresh, cold foods (e.g. popsicles, frozen grapes, cold water, ice cubes).
- Brush your teeth at least twice a day using a soft toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste. Floss daily if possible.

- Use a cool air humidifier or bedside vaporizer.
- Chew on sugar-free gum or suck on hard candy to create saliva.
- Use lip moisturizers in the form of a balm, cream or salve (e.g. Chapstick) to protect your lips.
- Ask your healthcare team about saliva substitutes.

#### What to Avoid:

- Avoid foods and drinks that are very acidic, caffeinated, sugary, salty, spicy or very hot in temperature.
- Avoid tobacco and alcohol, including alcohol-based mouthwashes.

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### Other resources

#### Mouth Care During Treatment

<https://bit.ly/cco-mouthcare>

#### More resources at

[mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient](http://mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient)

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#### Pharmacist

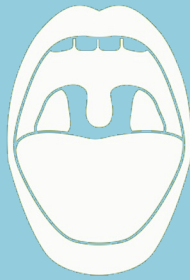
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#### Dietitian

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# Mouth Sores



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## Symptom Management Tip Sheet



### Let's talk about mouth sores...

- Mouth sores are small wounds that cause discomfort and make it harder to eat, swallow and/or talk.
- If your mouth sores make it hard to eat or drink properly, please contact your healthcare team.
- If you have open sores, white patches or very painful sores, please contact your your healthcare team.
- **Call your healthcare team immediately** if you have mouth sores and a fever (temperature greater than 38°C),



## What you can do

### PREVENTION

- Keep your mouth as clean and moist as possible.
- Brush your teeth at least twice daily using a soft toothbrush (or a soft foam toothette with salt/soda water). Floss daily if possible.
- Rinse toothbrush in hot water before using. Air dry after use.
- Avoid tobacco and alcohol, including alcohol-based mouthwashes.
- Drink 6-8 glasses of fluids per day.

### MANAGEMENT

- Try using a bland mouth rinse 4 times per day. Recipe: 1 cup warm water, ½ tsp table salt (or baking soda). Swish in your mouth for at least 30 seconds and spit out.
- Eat a soft diet (e.g. oatmeal, bananas, applesauce, cooked carrots, rice, pasta, eggs, etc.)
- Try taking pain medicine before meals to make eating easier.
- Avoid foods/drinks that are acidic, salty, spicy or very hot in temperature.
- If eating is hard, speak to a dietitian to ask about meal supplements or other ideas.

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## Other resources

### Mouth Care During Treatment

<https://bit.ly/cco-mouthcare>

### Preventing Mouth Sores (video)

<https://bit.ly/youtube-mouth>

### More resources at

[mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient](http://mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient)

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# Nausea / Vomiting



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## Symptom Management Tip Sheet

### Let's talk about nausea and vomiting...



- **Nausea** is a feeling of queasiness. **Vomiting** is a strong release of stomach contents through the mouth and may include retching/dry heaving.
- If you have nausea with a severe headache, or your vomit has blood in it or looks like coffee grounds, or you feel weak/dizzy **go to the Emergency Room**

Please call your healthcare team if you have any of these symptoms:

- you cannot keep down any liquids, food or medications
- you vomit twice in one day despite taking nausea medication
- you have abdominal pain

*\* 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

- Drink clear fluids, 6-8 glasses per day.
- Drink often and in small amounts instead of all at once.
- Avoid foods that are greasy/fried, very salty, spicy, or have strong smells.
- Avoid tobacco and alcohol.
- Sit upright or reclined with your head raised for 30-60 minutes after meals.
- Try relaxation therapy, like breathing techniques and listening to music.
- Consult with your medical team if you want to try acupuncture or acupressure therapy.
- Speak to your dietitian or pharmacist for other ideas.

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#### Nausea:

- Take your nausea medication as prescribed in order to prevent nausea from starting.
- Try to take your nausea medication 30 minutes before eating to be able to digest the medication.
- Try to eat 5-6 small meals per day.
- If you are taking nausea medication and your symptoms have not improved, contact your health care team.

#### Vomiting:

- Limit food and drink until vomiting stops. Always rinse your mouth after vomiting (to clean it).
- After 30-60 minutes without vomiting, sip clear fluids. Next, add dry starchy foods (crackers, dry toast, dry cereal, pretzels). Then try protein rich foods later (e.g. eggs, chicken).
- Try a bland rinse. Recipe: 1 cup warm water, ½ tsp table salt (or baking soda). Swish in your mouth for at least 30 seconds and spit out.

### Other resources

#### Managing Nausea + Vomiting

<https://bit.ly/cco-nauseavomiting>

#### Food Tips to Manage Nausea (video)

<https://bit.ly/youtube-nausea>

#### More resources at

[mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient](http://mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient)

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# Pain



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Rossy

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Cancer  
Network

## Symptom Management Tip Sheet



### Let's talk about pain...

- Pain can feel like any of the following: aching, stabbing, throbbing, pressure, gnawing, cramping, burning, tingling, shooting, and/or "pins and needles".
- If any of these types of pain are accompanied by a fever (temperature greater than 38°C), please **contact your healthcare team immediately**.
- If you have new or increased back pain, **go to the Emergency Room**.
- If your pain is new, please contact your healthcare team.



### What you can do

Add light physical activity to your routine (e.g. walking, cycling, stretching, or swimming).

Write down your pain level at the time you take your medicine and 1-2 hours after.

Try activities that may help you cope with the pain (e.g. listening to music, breathing exercises, mindfulness-based stress reduction, guided imagery, hypnosis, or art therapy).



### Seek More Advice

- Speak to your healthcare team to create a pain management plan to follow, including pain medications
- Take your pain medications as prescribed. If you have concerns about pain medicines, talk to your healthcare team about other solutions.
- If you are taking pain medicine, ask your healthcare team if you also need medicine to prevent constipation.

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### Other resources

#### Managing Pain

<https://bit.ly/ccp-pain>

#### Progressive Muscle Relaxation

<https://bit.ly/ccp-muscles>

#### More resources at

[mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient](http://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. 5



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

# Peripheral Neuropathy



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## Symptom Management Tip Sheet



### Let's talk about peripheral neuropathy...

- Peripheral Neuropathy can feel like numbness, tingling, burning, "pins and needles", tremors, off-balance, and/or pain in hands, feet, legs or arms.
- Peripheral Neuropathy can be a side effect of cancer treatment.
- If you have a sudden loss of feeling or strength please **call your healthcare team immediately.**



### What you can do

Look at your hands and feet daily for sores/blisters you may not feel.

To avoid burns, lower the temperature of your hot water heater. Use a thermometer to ensure shower/tub water is less than 120° F/49° C.

Avoid exposing fingers and toes to very cold temperatures.

Wear gloves when cooking, using the oven or doing dishes.

If you feel your peripheral neuropathy is getting worse please tell your healthcare team.

Consider acupuncture, massage, or yoga (but check with your healthcare team first)

Talk to an occupational therapist about using loafer-style shoes, velcro shoelaces, adaptive equipment (e.g. larger handles on forks/knives) or wrist braces to ease symptoms.

For Occupational Therapy or Physiotherapy, please ask your healthcare team for a referral.



### For Feet & Legs

- Make sure you have shoes that fit properly.
- Make sure walkways at home are clear of clutter. Remove small rugs and other tripping hazards.
- Make sure your shower or bath floor is not slippery.
- When walking on uneven ground, look at the ground to help keep yourself balanced.
- Dangle your legs before standing up to avoid dizziness.
- If you have trouble walking, talk to a physiotherapist about using a walker, cane, or splint to help with balance and walking, to develop a physical training plan, or try "TENS" therapy.

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### Other resources

General information at  
[mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient](http://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

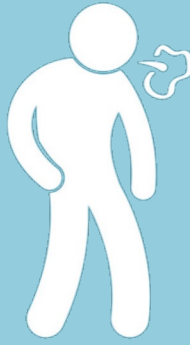
**JGH:** (514) 340-8222 ext. 25529

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# Shortness of Breath



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## Symptom Management Tip Sheet

### Let's talk about shortness of breath...



- This can include any breathing problem such as difficulty breathing, tightness in the chest, inability to catch your breath, and anxiety.
- Sometimes shortness of breath can happen if you feel anxious (see Anxiety Tip Sheet).
- If your shortness of breath is new or worse than before, please contact your health care team.
- If you are also coughing, or have trouble talking, or cannot lie down, **go to the Emergency Room.**
- If you are very short of breath, have chest pain or are panting/gasping **call 9-1-1 immediately.**
- If you have shortness of breath and a fever (temperature greater than 38°C), **contact your healthcare team 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

- When resting, try to sit upright.
- Try increasing air flow to your face by using a fan, open window or humidifier.
- Turn down the temperature in your house.
- Try different relaxation and breathing exercises (e.g. pursed lip breathing).
- Conserve your energy (balance activity with rest) or use support devices (e.g. wheelchair).
- Try to do physical activity (e.g. walking 15-30 min.) at least twice a week when your breathing is normal.

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### Support alternatives

Seek supportive counselling or try a program such as cognitive behavioral therapy.

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### Other resources

#### Managing Shortness of Breath

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

#### Causes and Treatments

<https://bit.ly/bccancer-breath>

#### Lung Cancer Canada

<https://www.lungcancerCanada.ca>

#### Managing Breathlessness (video)

<https://bit.ly/youtube-breath>

#### More resources at

[mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient](http://mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient)

### In your hospital

#### Symptom Hotlines

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

# Skin Rash



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## Symptom Management Tip Sheet

### Let's talk about skin rashes...



- A skin rash is a change in the colour, texture, or integrity of your skin, which might also be itchy.
- Contact your healthcare team if your rash is new.
- If you are getting radiation therapy and you have a rash at the site of treatment, call the Radiation Oncology team.

*\* 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

#### PREVENTION:

- When showering, use warm water instead of hot water.
- Take short showers and use mild non-scented soap.
- Avoid skin irritants such as alcohol-based or scented creams.
- Avoid the sun, or protect yourself from the sun.
- Moisturize your skin daily.



### Management

- Take oatmeal baths when your skin is itchy.
- Use a cool compress for itchy skin.
- Talk with your doctor (or other healthcare team member) to see if you could benefit from a medicated cream (for the rash or itchiness)

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### Other resources

- Understanding Skin Wounds**  
<http://bit.ly/bccancer-skin-wounds>
- Sun Safety**  
<https://bit.ly/bccancer-sunsafety>
- Understanding Skin Problems**  
<https://bit.ly/cancer-skinproblems>
- More resources at**  
[mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient](http://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. 5

#### Pharmacist

**MUHC:** (514) 934-1934 ext. 34121  
**JGH:** (514) 340-8222 ext. 25940  
**St. Mary's:** (514) 345-3511 ext. 3670

# Sleep Changes



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## Symptom Management Tip Sheet



### Let's talk about sleep changes...

- Sleep changes refer to actual or perceived changes in nighttime sleep causing daytime tiredness.
- If you have sleep problems for more than 3 days, contact your healthcare team.



### What you can do

Try to wake up at the same time each day.  
Get plenty of daylight soon after waking.  
Restrict napping in the daytime. Avoid long naps and naps after 3pm. If needed, limit to one nap (20-30 minutes) and spend at least four hours awake before bedtime.  
Exercise regularly.  
Try to clear your head of worries early in the evening (e.g. problem-solve, write down a plan or ideas, etc).  
Try to drink caffeine only in the morning.  
Avoid caffeine and stimulating activity in the evening.

Go to bed when you are sleepy and limit the bedroom for sleep and/or sex.

Create a comfortable sleep area (for example, remove bedroom clock, avoid computer screens, use ear plugs or eye masks).

Have a 60-minute relaxation time before bedtime when you do something like read, watch TV, crossword puzzle, listen to music, yoga, deep breathing, meditate, or try guided imagery.

Limit smoking, alcohol, spicy or heavy meals, too much fluids, and intense activities close to bedtime.

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### Other resources

#### Managing Sleep Problems

<https://bit.ly/bccancer-sleep>

#### More resources at

[mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient](http://mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient)

### In your hospital

#### Symptom Hotlines

*Don't hesitate to call!*

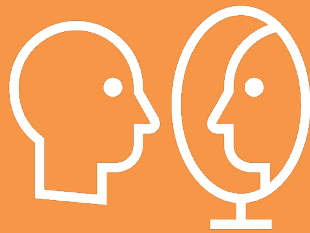
Hours of operation:  
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# Body Image



## Symptom Management Tip Sheet

### Let's talk about body image...



- Body image is how you feel about yourself physically and how you believe others see you. Your body image can affect how you see yourself overall as a person. The way your body looks might change because of cancer and treatments, and this can lead to some emotional distress or sadness.
- It is normal to be upset or angry at the way that cancer treatment has changed your body. Some people gain or lose weight. You may have lost your hair, or it has come back a different color.
- Changes to your body can seem like a constant reminders that life is different. You may worry that things will never be "normal" again and it can bring out insecurities about how you feel in public.
- Even if you don't have any physical changes that can be seen, you might still feel that others don't understand you or see you differently.



### What you can do

- **Be patient with yourself:** Give yourself time to grieve over any changes to your body. Also give yourself time to adjust to your new body and heal from your treatments.
- **Take care of your body:** Eating well and getting enough sleep is important. Exercise can help improve your mood, reduce fatigue. Check with your doctor before you start a new exercise routine.
- **Be open and creative:** If you cannot do some of the things you used to, be open to trying new things. You may find new activities that you like which can help you build your confidence back.
- **Tell your healthcare team about your concerns:** Ask your doctor or nurse to help you manage any limitations. It may seem hard to bring up some issues but it is important for you to advise your healthcare team so they can help you.
- **Talk about it with people you trust:** Having conversations about how you feel with family and friends who are easy to talk to can be a good way to understand your own emotions.
- **Join a support group:** Talk to other cancer patients about how they coped with their body changes. It can help you overcome body image issues and feel more in control.

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Source : How Body Image Concerns May Affect You - Cancer and Body Image Concerns ©2016 Macmillan Cancer Support. Coping with Cancer: Self-image and Sexuality ©2017 National Cancer Institute ©2020 University Health Network

### Other resources

#### Managing Body Image Concerns After Cancer Treatment

[https://www.uhn.ca/PatientsFamilies/Health\\_Information/Health\\_Topics/Documents/Managing\\_body\\_image\\_problems\\_after\\_cancer\\_treatment.pdf](https://www.uhn.ca/PatientsFamilies/Health_Information/Health_Topics/Documents/Managing_body_image_problems_after_cancer_treatment.pdf)

#### Body Image and Cancer

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wuG0S\\_jMcM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wuG0S_jMcM)

#### Look Good Feel Better

<https://lgfb.ca/en/workshop/register-workshop/>

#### Cedars CanSupport

<https://cansupport.ca/>

### In your hospital

#### Symptom hotlines

*Don't hesitate to call!*

Hours of operation:  
8AM to 4PM



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**JGH:** (514) 340-8222 ext. 25529

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

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

#### Psychosocial Oncology

**JGH:** (514) 340-8222 ext. 23223

**St. Mary's:** (514) 345-3511 ext. 6679

**MUHC:** (514) 934-1934 ext. 45502

**MUHC Social Work:** ext. 31569

#### Other resources:

**MUHC: Cedars CanSupport**

(514) 934-1934 ext. 35297

**JGH: Hope & Cope**

(514) 514-340-8255

**St. Mary's:** CanSupport or Hope & Cope



# Coughing



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## 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)

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### 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

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