

# Preventing Infections When Your White Blood Cell Count is Low

Low white blood cell (WBC) count is called neutropenia. Chemotherapy, radiation therapy, other treatments or an illness may cause a low WBC count. A low WBC count makes you more likely to get an infection.

**Often the only sign of an infection in a person with cancer is a fever.** Most people getting cancer treatments are told to check their temperature 2 times each day while their WBC count is low. Your doctor or nurse may give you other instructions. **Do not** take any medicines such as Tylenol to lower your temperature unless directed by your doctor.

When your WBC is low, you will need to take extra care to prevent infection.

## **To Help Prevent Infection:**

### **Hygiene**

- Wash your hands for at least 15 seconds with warm water and soap. Wash before eating, when preparing food, and after using the toilet. Anyone caring for you should do the same.
- Shower or take a bath every day if you are allowed.
- Do not take bubble baths or use hot tubs.
- Check your skin closely for cuts, rashes, redness, and swelling. Call your doctor if you have problems.
- After you urinate or have a bowel movement, always wipe from your front to your back. Wash your hands.
- Use an electric razor for shaving to avoid cuts.
- Use a soft bristle toothbrush to clean your teeth after eating and before bedtime. If you have dentures, clean them in the morning and evening.
- Inspect your mouth each day. Call your doctor if you have any redness, white patches, cuts, or bumps.
- Wear a mask or leave the room when it is being cleaned.
- Do not use douches or tampons.
- Use a condom and a water-based lubricant such as K-Y Jelly when having sexual intercourse. Do not use a diaphragm or IUD.

# 在白細胞計數低時 預防感染

低白細胞 (WBC) 計數稱為嗜中性白血球減少症 (neutropenia)。化療、放療、其他治療或疾病都可能引起低白細胞計數。白細胞計數低使你更有可能受到感染。

**經常，癌症患者受感染的唯一症狀是發燒。**大多數正進行癌症治療的患者在白細胞計數低時都被告知每天要檢查體溫 2 次。你的醫生或護士可能會給你其他的指示。除非由你的醫生指示，否則**不要服用**任何如 Tylenol 的藥物來降體溫。

當你白細胞低的時候，你需要格外小心避免感染。

## 要有助於避免感染：

### 衛生

- 以溫水和肥皂洗手至少 15 秒鐘。在吃東西之前、準備食物時以及在使用完廁所之後都要洗手。任何關心你的人都應當同樣這麼做。
- 如果可以，每天沖一個淋浴或洗一次澡。
- 不要洗泡泡浴或用熱浴缸。
- 仔細檢查皮膚有無切傷、皮疹、發紅和腫脹。如果你有問題，請打電話給你的醫生。
- 在你小便或大便之後，總是要從前面往後面擦。要洗手。
- 請用一把電動剃刀來剃鬚，以避免切傷。
- 使用一把軟毛牙刷，在吃東西後和就寢前刷牙。如果你戴假牙，早晨和傍晚都要將其清潔。
- 每天檢查口腔。如果你有任何發紅、白斑、切傷或腫塊，請打電話給你的醫生。
- 在清理房間時，請戴口罩或離開房間。
- 不要灌洗或用月經棉條。
- 在性交時請用避孕套和水基滑潤劑，如 K-Y 軟膏。不要使用子宮帽、避孕套或避孕環 (IUD)。

## **Food Safety**

- Do not eat raw or undercooked foods such as:
  - Fresh fruit or vegetables
  - Raw eggs, meat or fish
- Cook meat, fish and eggs well done.
- Use only **pasteurized** milk, cheeses, yogurt or cream.
- Do not leave drinks sitting out for more than 2 hours.

## **Other Tips**

- Get plenty of rest. Try to get about 8 hours of sleep a night.
- Walk, or at least sit up in a chair, 3-4 times a day. Pace yourself and do not get too tired.
- Avoid people with infections such as colds, flu, cold sores, shingles, chicken pox, measles and mumps.
- Avoid people who have had vaccines in the past few weeks. Vaccines could be for polio, rubella, mumps, measles, yellow fever, or smallpox.
- Ask your doctor before getting vaccines when your WBC count is low.
- Do not clean birdcages, fish tanks, or cat litter boxes. If there is no one to help you, wear rubber gloves and throw them away after every use.
- Wear gloves when gardening. Avoid plants and live flowers in vases.
- Have your furnace filters changed each month.

Call your doctor **right away** if you have:

- A fever over 100.5° F or 38° C
- Chills or sweats
- Any signs of infection such as redness, warmth, swelling, drainage, or pain
- Sweats
- Feel more tired
- Sore throat or mouth
- A cough
- Pain or burning when passing urine
- Cloudy or bloody urine

**Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.**

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## **食品安全**

- 不要吃生的或未煮熟的食物，例如：
  - 新鮮水果或蔬菜
  - 生雞蛋、肉或魚
- 將雞蛋、肉或魚做得很熟。
- 只食用**消毒**牛奶、乾酪、酸奶或奶油。
- 請不要將飲料擺放超過 2 個小時。

## **其他提示**

- 要多休息。一晚請試著睡大約 8 小時。
- 走路，或至少在椅子中坐直，一天 3-4 次。自己定步調，不要太疲累。
- 避開感染感冒、流感、感冒瘡、帶狀皰疹、水痘、麻疹和流行性腮腺炎的人士。
- 避開在過去幾個星期裡注射疫苗的人。疫苗可能是為小兒麻痺症、風疹、流行性腮腺炎、麻疹、黃熱病或天花。
- 當你白細胞計數低的時候，在注射疫苗之前先向你的醫生詢問。
- 不要清理鳥籠、魚箱或貓垃圾箱。如果沒有人幫你，請戴橡膠手套，每次用完之後丟掉手套。
- 作園藝時請戴手套。避開花瓶中的植物和鮮花。
- 每個月請人將你的火爐過濾網換掉。

如果你有以下症狀，請**立刻**打電話給你的醫生：

- 超過華氏 100.5 度或攝氏 38 度的發燒
- 發寒或出汗
- 任何如發紅、發熱、腫脹、流排洩物或疼痛的感染症狀
- 出汗
- 感到更加疲累
- 喉嚨痛或口痛
- 咳嗽
- 小便時疼痛或灼痛
- 小便不清或帶血

**如果您有任何疑問或關注事項，請告知您的醫生或護士。**

Preventing Infections WBC. Traditional Chinese.

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