

NEUTROPENIA

Patient Information



WHAT IS NEUTROPENIA / LEUKOPENIA?

Having neutropenia means that you have a decrease in your white cell count and neutrophil count. This can cause bone marrow suppression which is a common side-effect of cancer treatment.



WHAT IS BONE MARROW SUPPRESSION?

Bone marrow suppression is characterised by anaemia (decrease in red blood cells), leukopenia (decrease in white blood cells) and thrombocytopenia (decrease in the platelet count), all of which decreases your body's ability to fight off infections.

MANAGEMENT OF NEUTROPENIA

- Go for regular blood check-ups
- Avoid crowds and people with infection
- Do not allow people with colds, flu, diarrhoea, or infections to visit your home
- Maintain strict hand washing
- Call a doctor immediately if any of the following symptoms appear:
 - aching, chills or shaking
 - tenderness or redness of the central venous site
 - excessive fatigue
 - blisters on the lip, mouth sores or sore throat
 - burning or painful urination
 - skin sores or rash
 - earache
 - unusual or foul smelling vaginal discharge
 - diarrhoea
 - low blood pressure

WHAT IS NEUTROPENIC SEPSIS?

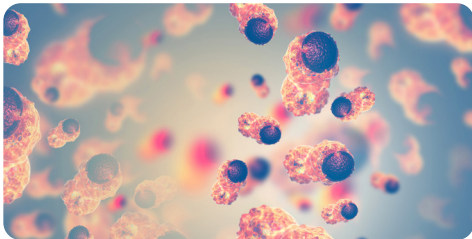
Neutropenic sepsis is a medical emergency and you should notify your doctor and **get to a medical facility / emergency unit as soon as possible.**

SYMPTOMS OF NEUTROPENIC SEPSIS

- Fever greater than 38°C.
- Nervousness.
- Confusion.
- Low neutrophil count.

MANAGEMENT OF NEUTROPENIC SEPSIS

- You will be admitted to the ward for urgent management.
- You will be placed in an isolation ward (if available).
- Should you have a temperature above 38°C, blood cultures will be sent to the laboratory and antibiotics will be administered through your port.
- Your urine output will be measured.



TIPS FOR PREVENTING INFECTIONS

Avoid contact with germs:

- Wash your hands often, especially before eating and after using the bathroom.
- Avoid visiting crowded areas.
- Stay away from people who have recently had immunisations, e.g. vaccines for chicken pox, small pox or flu.
- Wear protective gloves when gardening or cleaning up after animals and small children.
- Clean cuts and scrapes right away with warm water, soap and an antiseptic.

Avoid cuts, scrapes and burns:

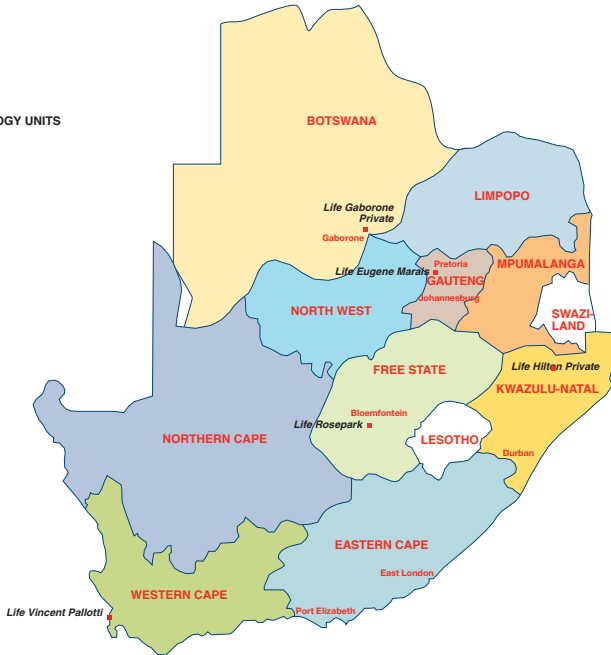
- Don't squeeze or scratch pimples.
- Clean your rectal area gently but thoroughly after bowel movement.

Ask your doctor or nurse for advice if the area becomes irritated or if you have haemorrhoids and check with the doctor before using enemas and suppositories.

- Don't cut, bite or tear the cuticles of your nails.
- Be careful not to cut or nick yourself when using scissors, needles or knives.
- Use an electronic shaver instead of a razor.
- Use an extra soft toothbrush that won't hurt your gums and talk to your doctor before using dental floss.



Life Oncology units are located in the following areas:



Oncology units

FREE STATE ■ Life Rosepark Hospital **GAUTENG** ■ Life Eugene Marais Hospital **KWAZULU-NATAL** ■ Life Hilton Private Hospital
WESTERN CAPE ■ Life Vincent Pallotti Hospital **BOTSWANA** ■ Life Gaborone Private Hospital

FREE STATE

LIFE ROSEPARK HOSPITAL

57 Gustav Crescent, Fichardt Park, Bloemfontein, 9301
 Tel: 051 505 5111

GAUTENG

LIFE EUGENE MARAIS HOSPITAL

Corner of 5th Avenue and Booyen Street, Les Marais, Pretoria, 0084
 Tel: 012 334 2507

KWAZULU-NATAL

LIFE HILTON PRIVATE HOSPITAL

Corner of Monzali Drive and Hilton Avenue, Hilton Garden, 3245
 Tel: 033 329 5820

WESTERN CAPE

LIFE VINCENT PALLOTTI HOSPITAL

Alexandra Road, Pinelands, Cape Town, 7405
 Tel: 021 506 5111

BOTSWANA

LIFE GABORONE PRIVATE HOSPITAL

Plot 8448 Mica Way, Broadhurst, Gaborone
 Tel: +267 368 5746

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