

## Your Child with Cancer: When to Call the Doctor

Please call if you have questions or concerns about how your child is feeling. There is a doctor available to talk with you 24 hours 7 days a week.

### Call the doctor right away if your child has any of the following:

- Fever of 38.0<sup>0</sup> C (100.4<sup>0</sup> F) or higher
- Shaking chills
- Bruising, bleeding, or small red or purple spots on the skin called petechiae
- Head injury
- More tired than usual
- Uncontrolled pain or severe headache
- Weakness of the face, arm or leg
- Problems with urination
- Vomiting (3 times in one day)
- Diarrhea (3 times in one day)
- Constipation (No bowel movement in 3 days)
- Shortness of breath or frequent cough
- Skin breakdown, rash or any signs of infection
- Has a break in central line catheter
- Change in your child's behavior

### Information to have ready to tell your doctor

- Your child's name and diagnosis
- Name and date of recent chemotherapy
- Your child's most recent blood counts
- The reason you are calling

### Important Phone Numbers

#### Urgent Medical Concern

8:00am-4:30pm – (608) 262-0486

Ask to speak with your nurse practitioner

#### Evening, Weekend, or Holiday –

(608) 262-0486

Ask to speak with the pediatric hematologist-oncologist on-call

#### Non-Urgent Medical Concern

Any time – (608) 263-6420

Your call will be directed to a clinic scheduler or nurse. They can answer questions about your lab or test results, appointments, or medicines.

### Why is it important to call your doctor right away with symptoms?

During cancer treatment your child is at risk for neutropenia and other side effects.

- Neutrophils are a specific type of white blood cell which help our bodies fight infection.
- Neutropenia is when the neutrophils are less than 500 cells/mm<sup>3</sup> and there is a greater risk for infection.

### What causes Neutropenia?

Chemotherapy, radiation, or your child's cancer can cause neutropenia. You need to know the signs and symptoms of infection when your child is neutropenic or has a low neutrophil count.

**What you can do when your child is neutropenic:**

- Wash your hands. Wash before making meals, eating, after using the bathroom and playing outside. This is the best way to prevent infection.
- Avoid people who are ill.
- Do not share food, drinks, cups, utensils or personal items.
- Brush teeth twice daily with a soft toothbrush.
- If your child has had a stem cell transplant, you may need to wear a mask. Your doctor or nurse will tell you if you need to wear a mask.

The Spanish version of this *Health Facts for You* is #8060s

If you are a patient receiving care at UnityPoint – Meriter, Swedish American or a health system outside of UW Health, please use the phone numbers provided in your discharge instructions for any questions or concerns.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctors or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright© 1/2019. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the department of Nursing. HF#8060