

## Women's Sexual Health During and After Cancer Treatment

We ask you to follow certain guidelines during sex when having certain cancer treatments. These treatments include:

- Chemotherapy
- Biotherapy
- Targeted therapies
- Blood stem cell transplant
- Radiation therapy

### Prevent Pregnancy

Avoid getting pregnant during cancer treatment. Before starting and while getting treatment, your doctor or nurse will ask if you could be pregnant. You will have a pregnancy test before starting treatment. Talk with your doctor about the birth control method you will use.

Chemotherapy has risks to the fetus such as:

- Slow fetal growth during pregnancy
- Low blood counts in fetus
- Premature birth
- Fetal defects or death

Getting pregnant too soon after the end of treatment may harm the baby. Talk to a fertility specialist about having children in the future.

### Protect Yourself

Use a condom when having sex to decrease the risk of a sexually transmitted disease. If your platelet count or white blood cell count is low, avoid sex until your blood counts are normal. Low white blood counts increase your risk of infection. Low platelet counts increase your risk for excess bleeding and bruising that may occur during sex. Avoid oral and anal sex during cancer treatment due to risk of infection.

### Protect Your Partner

Chemotherapy, biotherapy and targeted therapy are present in your saliva, urine, stool, blood, and vaginal fluids for at least 48 hours after your last treatment. Protect your partner from being exposed to these fluids during oral, vaginal, and anal sex. A condom may provide some protection. Avoid all sexual activity, even open mouth kissing, to protect your partner.

You and your partner can safely share signs of affection and support during your cancer treatment, such as touching, hugging and closed mouth kissing.

Ask your doctor or nurse if you have any questions about sex during and after cancer treatment.