



COPING WITH / PREVENTING OXALIPLATIN COLD DYSESTHESIAS A PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET

You are being treated for cancer with a chemotherapy medication called *Oxaliplatin*. This medication has an unusual side effect called “**cold dysesthesia**”. This means that different parts of your body may be very sensitive to cold – cold drinks, cold food, and cool or cold outdoor temperatures. You may feel the following sensations in relation to cold exposure.

- Tingling, numbness, stiffness or tightness in hands and feet
- Tightness in your throat or jaw; difficulty swallowing
- Abnormal sensation in your tongue
- Difficulty breathing; like you can’t catch your breath; chest pressure

Problems with breathing and swallowing can be unpleasant but these episodes generally subside within a few moments. If persistent, especially if associated with chest pain, seek medical attention.

Problems with tingling and numbness can be an ongoing side effect which can flare with exposure to cold.

The following is a list of suggestions to help reduce or prevent ***Oxaliplatin Cold Dysesthesias***

- Avoid the cold. If you must go outside, protect your face and mouth with a scarf or high-necked sweater, wear mittens and warm socks.
- Have someone warm up the car before you get in.
- Take shallow breaths when exposed to cold air (e.g. freezer, outside in winter)
- Wear gloves when reaching into the fridge or freezer; when touching cold metal objects (e.g. car door, mailbox).
- Avoid direct contact with cold water. Ensure taps run with warm water when washing hands, showering or bathing.
- Make sure your drinks are warm or at room temperature. Use a straw if possible.
- Avoid ice cream and other frozen treats.
- Avoid sucking on ice cubes or ice chips while you are receiving your chemotherapy treatment.
- Keep the air conditioner in your house or car on a lower setting.
- Wear long sleeves or pants when in an air-conditioned room.
- Avoid walking barefoot.
- If your body gets cold, warm up the affected part.

If symptoms related to ***Oxaliplatin Cold Dysesthesia*** continue for more than a week, or if they interfere with your ability to use your hands in everyday tasks, discuss with your doctor at your next appointment.

References:

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5. Wickham R. Chemotherapy-induced peripheral neuropathy: a review and implications for oncology nursing practice. Clin J Oncol Nurs 2007;11(3):361-76.