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Helping Kids Through Cancer: A Parent's Guide to Infections

Knowing the signs and symptoms of an infection and the steps you can take to prevent infections may help make this challenging time easier to get through.



Why Infections are a Concern

- Chemotherapy targets fast-growing cells, including healthy ones.
- Neutropenia occurs when the levels of white blood cells drop, thereby increasing the risk of infection.



Signs of Infection

- Fever: Oral temperature of 100.4°F (38.0°C) or higher.
- Other signs include chills, sweats, shortness of breath, and changes in cough or throat.



Act Promptly

- Treat fever as an emergency; call the doctor immediately.
- Monitor for signs like stomach pain, changes in skin, and increased urination.
- Any new symptoms should be reported to medical team promptly.



Preventing Infections

- Regular handwashing is crucial. Use hand sanitizer when soap is unavailable.
- Avoid sharing cups, utensils, and toothbrushes.
- Encourage proper oral care with regular teeth brushing.
- Limit contact with sick individuals; no live virus vaccines during treatment.
- Get annual flu shots for your child and close contacts.



Additional Tips

- Discuss your child's condition with school staff.
- Consult the doctor before international travel, swimming, or hot tub use.
- Be cautious with toys; wash regularly and avoid sharing.
- No raw or undercooked meat or eggs for your child.
- Caregivers should avoid artificial nails.

Remember: Being proactive and taking preventive steps can help your child stay safe during cancer treatment. Always consult with your child's healthcare provider for personalized advice and guidance.

Reference: <https://www.preventcancerinfections.org/health-tip-sheet/caring-children-cancer#>

