



## Pregnancy Prevention During Cancer Treatment

Preventing pregnancy during cancer treatment is important for both men and women. If you were to get pregnant while you or your partner were getting cancer treatment, it could affect the health of the baby.

### How can cancer treatments affect pregnancy?

Some of the effects caused by cancer treatments are known and some are not. Some of the known effects include:

- If you are pregnant, there could be a delay in your cancer treatment which can lead to your cancer getting worse.
- Miscarriage.
- Birth defects or even death of the fetus.
- Slow fetal growth.
- The baby being born earlier than its due date (premature).
- Higher risk of childhood cancers for babies.

### How can pregnancy be prevented?

Preventing pregnancy during treatment can be done by using contraceptives (birth control). Some medications affect how well hormonal birth control works. Ask your provider which types of birth control will work best for you and which are most effective.

Types of birth control are:

- Permanent Birth Control
  - Vasectomy: Surgery to cut the male vasa deferentia which stops sperm from entering the urethra.
  - Tubal Ligation: Surgery to tie or close a woman's fallopian tubes so that sperm and eggs cannot meet, and an egg cannot become fertilized.
- Abstinence: Not having sexual intercourse.
- Non-hormonal/Barrier Methods
  - Diaphragm/Cervical cap.
  - Sponge.
  - Spermicide.
  - Male condom.
  - Female condom.
- Hormonal Methods
  - Progestin implant that is placed in a woman's arm.
  - Progestin injections.
  - Oral contraceptives (birth control pills).

- Contraceptive patch for women.
- Vaginal ring.
- Intrauterine Devices (IUD)
  - Copper T Intrauterine Device.
  - Levonorgestrel Intrauterine System.
- Emergency Contraception: This can be used in some cases if birth control was not used during sexual intercourse or if birth control failed.
  - Copper IUD.
  - Emergency contraceptive pills.

If you are of childbearing age and are getting treatment for cancer, it is important for you to use effective birth control. Use birth control even if your periods have stopped, you have a low sperm count, or your provider has told you that the treatment may make you infertile since that is not guaranteed.

Your provider may suggest you wait a certain amount of time after treatment has ended to get pregnant or father a child. Talk to your provider about any questions you have. If you want to have children in the future, you should speak to your provider about [fertility options](#).

---

OncoLink is designed for educational purposes only and is not engaged in rendering medical advice or professional services. The information provided through OncoLink should not be used for diagnosing or treating a health problem or a disease. It is not a substitute for professional care. If you have or suspect you may have a health problem or have questions or concerns about the medication that you have been prescribed, you should consult your health care provider.