



Medical Oncology Glossary

This glossary has words that you may hear while getting treatment for cancer.

Acute Side Effects – Effects that you may have while taking the medication or shortly after getting it.

Adjuvant Therapy – Cancer treatment that is given after the initial treatment. This is most often chemotherapy given after surgery.

Bone Marrow – Spongy area inside your bone that makes blood cells.

Chemotherapy – Medication used to treat cancer.

Cycle – A cycle is the period of time in which you get medications to treat your cancer and the days until your next scheduled treatment. For example, you get a dose of the medicine on day 1 and then have 21 days until the next dose. That 3-week period is called a cycle.

Imaging Test – Tests that are done to look at the inside of your body. They can be used to stage your cancer, see how well treatment is working, or to work-up a new health issue.

Laboratory Test (labs) – Laboratory tests use bodily fluid, like blood and urine, to monitor how your body is working. These can include a complete blood count, chemistry panel, or a urinalysis.

Late Effects – Effects caused by a cancer treatment that you have months to years after getting treatment.

Long-Term Effects – Effects that happen during cancer treatment and continue after treatment has ended.

Nadir – This is the term used to describe when your blood cell counts are at their lowest after treatment, usually 7-12 days after treatment.

Neo-adjuvant Therapy – Cancer treatment that is given before the main treatment (often surgery) to shrink the tumor.

Neutropenic – A low white blood cell count. White blood cells fight infection. If you are neutropenic, you have a higher risk of infection.

Regimen – A chemotherapy regimen is the group of medications being used, the dose, and how often you will get them. This may change as you continue through treatment.

Secondary Cancer – Secondary cancer is cancer that is caused by the treatment for another cancer.

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