

# WHAT IS IMMUNOTHERAPY?

Immunotherapy is used to treat different types of cancers. Your doctor may prescribe immunotherapy for the treatment of your cancer. There are different types of immunotherapy currently offered. Immunotherapy refers to treatments that help boost your body's immune system to fight cancer. Your immune system is made up of different organs, antibodies (proteins) and immune cells that work collectively to fight disease and infections. Since immunotherapy works by stimulating your own immune system it can have effects on many different parts of your body.

Immune cells produce protein molecules called cytokines that act on other cells. Immunotherapy can introduce large amounts of these proteins into your body. It is important to be aware of side effects that may occur, and to alert your care team right away if you think you are experiencing any. Side effects may occur in up to 30-50% of patients.

## IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- Side effects may begin shortly after treatment has started, or even months after treatment has completed. It is important to notify your care team of any changes you are feeling.
- The chance of experiencing side effects increases if you are receiving more than one immunotherapy.
- It is important to let your care team know of any changes in your home medications while on treatment.



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# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT IMMUNOTHERAPY SIDE EFFECTS

Contact your health care team right away if you think you may be experiencing any of the following:

## BRAIN

Fever, confusion, changes in mood or behavior, neck stiffness, seizures, extreme sensitivity to light

## HORMONE GLAND

(particularly thyroid, pituitary, adrenal glands & pancreas)  
Persistent or unusual headaches, extreme tiredness, weight loss or gain, fast heartbeat, increased sweating, hair loss, constipation, dizziness or fainting

## LUNG

(pneumonitis)

New or worsening cough, shortness of breath

## KIDNEY

Decreased urine output, blood in the urine

## SKIN

Rashes, itching, blistering, painful sores or ulcers

## JOINT OR MUSCLES

Severe or persistent muscle or joint pain, severe muscle weakness

## EYES

Blurry or double vision or other vision problems; eye pain or redness

## HEART

Chest pain, shortness of breath, irregular heartbeat

## LIVER

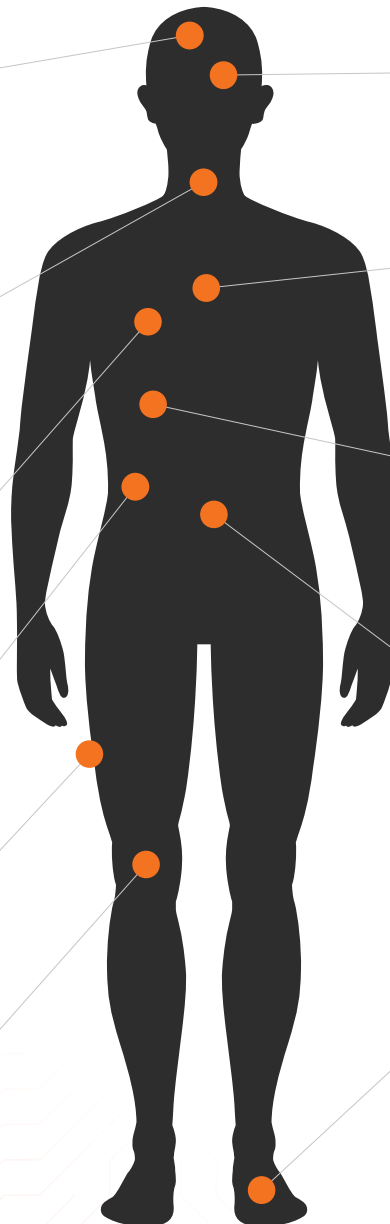
Yellowing of the skin or the whites of the eyes, severe nausea/vomiting, pain on the right side of the stomach area, dark urine, bleeding or bruising more easily than normal

## INTESTINAL

Diarrhea or more bowel movements than usual, stools that have blood or are dark, tarry, or sticky; severe stomach-area pain

## NERVE

Numbness or tingling in hands or feet, unusual weakness in legs, arms, or face



The information was gathered from the National Comprehensive Cancer Network "Understanding Immunotherapy Side Effects" infographic.