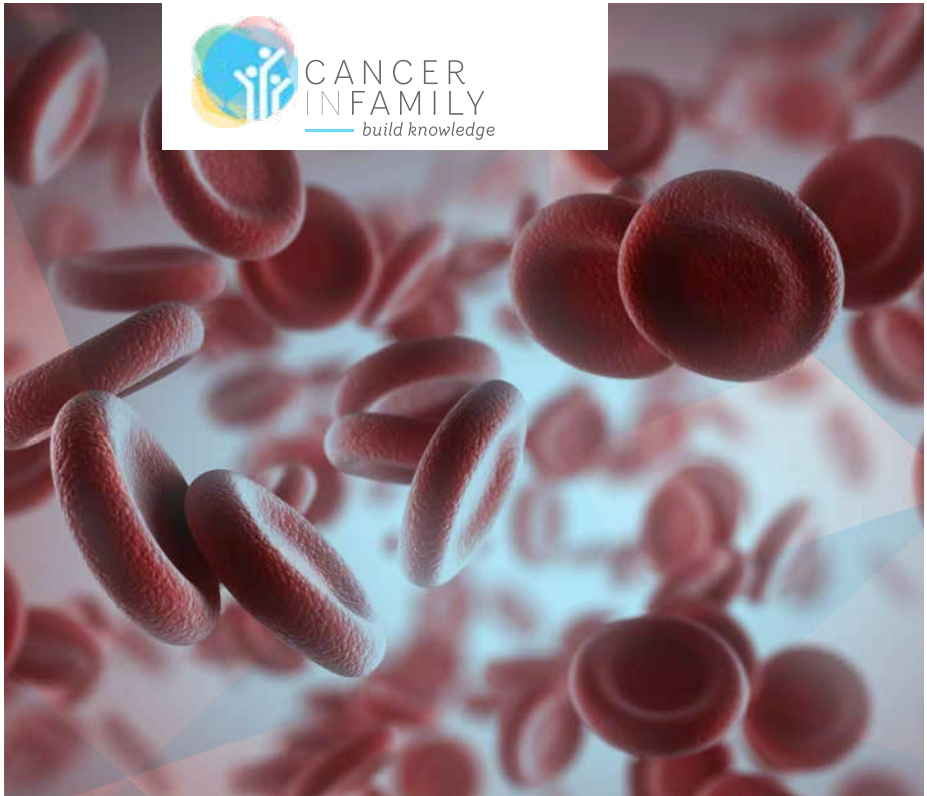




CANCER
INFAMILY
— build knowledge

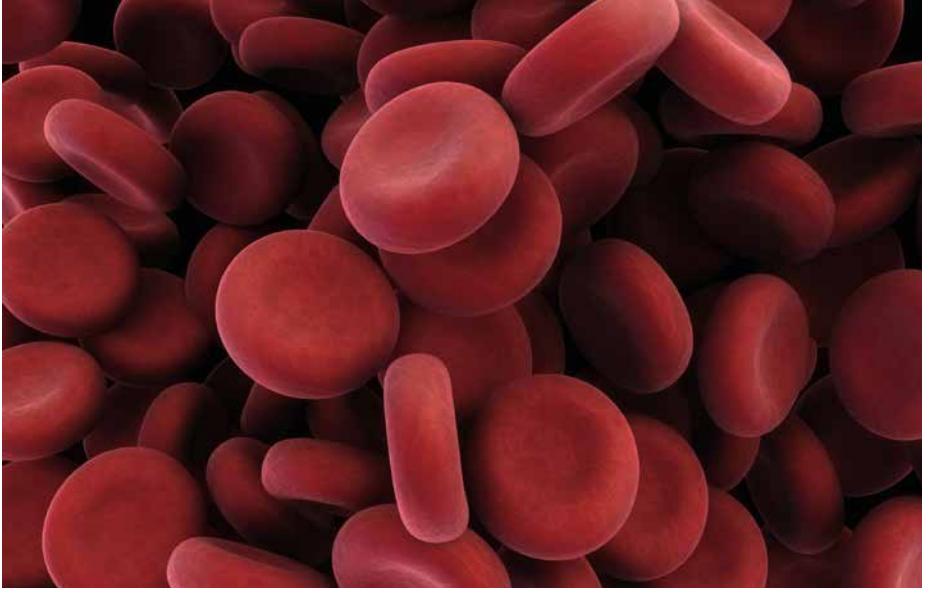


ANEMIA

This leaflet is about anemia, a common side effect of chemotherapy. Ask your doctor if your treatment(s) put you at risk of developing the condition.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS LEAFLET SHOULD NEVER REPLACE THOSE OF THE DOCTOR/ONCOLOGIST WHO CLOSELY FOLLOWS YOUR CASE.

Anemia



Chemotherapy affects 3 different types of blood cells produced in the bone marrow:

- ✘ erythrocytes (or red blood cells)- carry oxygen throughout the body.
- ✘ leukocytes (or white blood cells) - defend the body from infection.
- ✘ plaquets - mediate blood coagulation, they are essential to stop bleedings.

An abnormally low number of any of these cell types in the blood can be dangerous to the cancer patient. To avoid that your doctor will regularly check their numbers with blood tests.



Anemia develops when the body does not have enough red blood cells (erythrocytes).

Erythrocytes are the cells responsible for carrying oxygen throughout the body. Oxygen is the cells' source of energy, and without it, organs and tissues struggle to work properly. This is why a common symptom of anemia is to feel tired all the time. Anemia can also result from a hemorrhage – a bleeding.

Symptoms of anemia include:

- × Fatigue/tiredness.
- × Dizziness.
- × Pale skin.
- × A tendency to feel abnormally cold.
- × Shortness of breath.
- × Weakness.



What to avoid:

- × Intense physical activity.
- × High altitude – because its lower oxygen content can cause severe vertigo .



What to do if you are anemic:

- Eat foods rich in iron such as:
- × lean meat – skinless chicken and turkey,
 - × liver, fish/seafood, dark green leafy vegetables, such as spinach, dried fruit, such as raisins and apricots, iron-fortified cereals, breads and pastas. Beans and lentils (legumes) - vitamin C from citrus such as lemons and oranges, if taken at same time, can increase iron absorption from vegetables.

Spare your energy.

- ×
- × Take iron supplements if your doctor
- × thinks they are necessary.

If your red blood cells numbers

- × remain too low, you might need a transfusion.

- × Some patients can be prescribed
- × a grow factor to stimulate the bone marrow production of blood cells by the hospital.



PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLETS ARE NOT MEANT TO REPLACE THE INFORMATION, ADVICE AND SUPPORT PROVIDED BY YOUR DOCTOR

Sources: American Cancer Society, Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Mayo Clinic and recent research papers / **Scientific Review:** Maria Rita Dionísio, Médica Oncologista, Fundação Champalimaud / **Content:** Susana Lamas, Catarina Amorim / **Project coordination:** Filipe Santos Silva / **Design:** www.estudiorjdesign.com / **Illustrations:** www.zecardoso.com/ / **Project by:** Public Awareness of Cancer Unit, IPATIMUP October 2018 / + **info:** www.cancronafamilia.org

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