



CANCER  
INFAMILY  
— build knowledge

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# MEMORY AND REASONING

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*This booklet discusses memory and reasoning/cognitive problems that might develop during your cancer treatment. Ask your doctor if you are at risk of these and how to minimize them.*

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

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## Memory and reasoning

Science has shown that chemotherapy can affect brain functions, such as concentration, memory, understanding, and reasoning.

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**Some patients complain that they have difficulty:**

- × Concentrating or staying focused.
- × Doing more than one thing at a time.
- × Remembering things.

Sometimes patients report these symptoms even before starting treatment. This is because they can have many different origins, such as fatigue, stress, anxiety, having anesthesia but also chemotherapy.

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The changes in the patients are often very subtle, but people tend to be very much aware of alterations in their thinking ability.

Right now, there is no medication to prevent memory and cognitive problems, but knowing that the symptoms are real might help patients and their families feel less isolated. In fact, about 75% of all cancer patients complain of cognitive problems during treatment.

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### *How to improve your Memory and Reasoning abilities*

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If you are having reasoning problems that interfere with your daily life, there are exercises and memory training programs to help your memory and problem solving abilities. You can also try some games, such as: Sudoku, crosswords, letter soup, puzzles and others (e.g. online games).

*Ask your doctor  
to be referred to  
a healthcare  
professional that  
can help you with  
these issues.*

Additionally, if the symptoms remain after the end of the treatment there is medication that may help - stimulants, cognition-helping drugs or antidepressants – as well as specific occupational therapy and cognitive rehabilitation.

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**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, Dr Catarina Amorim / **Project coordination:** Filipe Santos Silva / **Design:** [www.estudiorjdesign.com](http://www.estudiorjdesign.com) / **Illustrations:** [www.zecardoso.com](http://www.zecardoso.com) / **Project by:** Public Awareness of Cancer Unit, IPATIMUP October 2018 / **+ info:** [www.cancronafamilia.org](http://www.cancronafamilia.org)

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E INOVAÇÃO EM SAÚDE  
UNIVERSIDADE DO PORTO

UNIVERSIDADE DE LISBOA  
CENTRO DE INVESTIGAÇÃO EM ONCOLOGIA  
**ipatimup**

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