

Sexuality and Medical Therapies: My Sex Life

Sexuality includes the ways our body works, our gender, our sexual orientation, and our values about love and relationships. Having sexual intercourse is just one way to express sexuality. But, it's especially important to take good care of yourself if you are having sex. Many physical changes that happen during chemo and radiation treatments can affect sexual relationships. Here are some of the things that happen to your body that affect sex and sexuality.

Infections: UTIs, STIs, and Yeast Infections

If you are having sex, having one partner may reduce your risk of infections, like sexually transmitted infections (STIs).



Use condoms to prevent sexually transmitted diseases.



Avoid unprotected sex (even oral sex) to prevent spreading infections.



Avoid sexual intercourse when your absolute neutrophil count (ANC) is under 1,000 because you are prone to infection.

Bleeding



Avoid sexual contact that is likely to make you bleed, like rough sex or anal sex.



Avoid sexual intercourse when your platelet levels are under 50,000.

IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER:

Use condoms during sexual contact to prevent STIs. If you are having intimate contact with someone, it is important to talk to your doctor or nurse if you have questions. We will keep it private.



Vaginal Dryness



Use water soluble and fragrance-free lubricants only.



Avoid Vaseline or oil-based lubricants.

Radioactive Body Fluids

Some chemo and radiation stays in your bodily fluids for a few days and may be harmful to people who come in contact with them.



Avoid sexual contact 72 hours after chemo or radiation.

Even if you are very careful about avoiding infections, there are still times that it is important to avoid sexual contact to stay healthy.



Avoid Sexual Intercourse When:

Avoid sex when your absolute neutrophil count (ANC) is under 1,000 and you are prone to infection. As well as when your platelet levels are under 50,000 and you have a higher risk for bleeding.

