

The side effects of cancer treatment drugs

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COPING WITH DRUG SIDE EFFECTS The Side Effects of Cancer Treatment

Drugs QUESTION Hair loss resulting from cancer treatment can be very hard to deal with emotionally and even physically. This is worse when the affected person is a child. However, there are several steps that can be taken to improve the quality of life of these children. Sometimes other children may distance themselves because they are not sure what to say. It is important that one advises the child to be more open to talking about the condition with her friends. This helps in relaxing them and getting them comfortable around her. Additionally, the parents or guardians can look for a support group where the child can meet other children suffering from the same condition.

If the child is worried about her appearance, the parents can advise her to try different styles of hair and makeup. She can wear wigs, use scarves or even come up with a cool bald-shaven look. Additionally, to maintain the quality of the remaining hair, she should use gentle hair products and use gentle brushes when combing. Dyes and hair-straighteners should be avoided as they only lead to more hair loss. She should also desist from constantly massaging her head as this can aid in hair loss. When sleeping, she should wear a soft night cap to prevent waking up with hair all over the bed which can lead to further emotional distress. Above all, the child should be informed that the situation will get better with time as she adapts to the treatment.

QUESTION 4

Antineoplastic drugs or chemotherapy agents have several side effects on patients some of which are severe and life-threatening. If a patient is quiet and listless, it may be due to general fatigue or anemia caused by the drugs

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as they inhibit the growth of new white and red blood cells. Additionally, this may be due to a condition known as peripheral neuropathy which makes it difficult to walk/balance and pick things up. The patient can be encouraged to engage in fun activities and also take some energy drinks to improve his/her mood.

The most common adverse side effects of Antineoplastic drugs include;

Anemia and Fatigue

Nerve problems

Reproductive side effects such as irregular periods, hot flashes and decrease in sexual interests.

Peripheral edema

Hair Loss

References

“Methotextrate.” (n. d). MedlinePlus. Retrieved from <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginfo/meds/a682019.html>