



# Red flag symptom checklist

## How to use this checklist?

Keep this checklist where you can see it at home and saved on your phone. Share a copy with your caregiver. Bring it to all oncology visits: initial consults, chemo or radiation sessions, imaging days, surgery pre-assessments, and telehealth. Tick what applies to you and add your own notes. If a symptom meets 'Go to Emergency', stop reading and seek urgent care now.

**If in doubt, call your oncology team — it's always okay to ask.**

## Emergency contacts (fill out in advance):

Add your local emergency number (e.g., 112/999/911) and your medical team's contact details so you can reach them quickly if you're unsure, worried, or your symptoms worsen.

Suggested fields to fill:

---

Local emergency number

---

Closest emergency department (name/address)

---

Oncology clinic (24/7 if available)

---

After-hours/on-call line

---

Primary clinician name

---

Primary clinician phone number

---

### Important disclaimer

This checklist is for personal tracking and self-management support only and does not constitute medical advice or replace guidance from your medical team. If you are in any doubt, or if symptoms change or worsen, contact your medical team or local emergency services immediately.

# Red Flag Symptoms:

## Call emergency services now

Trouble breathing, severe shortness of breath, or blue/gray lips.

Chest pain, tightness, pressure, or coughing up blood.

Fever  $\geq 38.0^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) if you are on chemotherapy or recently had chemotherapy, especially with chills/shaking.

Heavy bleeding that doesn't stop after 10 minutes of firm pressure, or you feel faint/pale.

New confusion, difficulty waking, seizure, or fainting.

Stroke signs: one sided weakness, slurred speech, sudden severe headache, or vision loss.

Severe back pain with new leg weakness/numbness or loss of bladder/bowel control (possible spinal cord compression).

Severe allergic reaction: swelling of face/lips/tongue, wheezing, hives, dizziness/faintness.

Signs of sepsis: fever or feeling very cold; fast heartbeat; fast breathing; extreme weakness; clammy/mottled skin — tell responders you are a cancer patient.

Severe or bloody diarrhea with belly pain, or dehydration symptoms (very little urine, severe dizziness).

Post surgery emergencies: vomiting with abdominal swelling and severe pain; wound opening with heavy bleeding; new chest pain or shortness of breath.

## Additional red flags (as advised via medical team)

# Red Flag Symptoms:

## Call emergency services now

### Chemotherapy (myelosuppressive)

- Any fever of 38.0°C (100.4°F) or higher, or chills/shaking
- Sore throat, cough, burning when urinating, or any localized pain with fever
- Unusual bruising, nosebleeds, bleeding gums, multiple tiny red spots on skin (petechiae)
- Extreme fatigue with shortness of breath or dizziness (possible anemia)

### Immunotherapy (can occur weeks to months after treatment):

- Severe or bloody diarrhea, or bad stomach pain (possible colitis)
- New or worsening cough, shortness of breath, or chest pain (possible pneumonitis or myocarditis)
- Yellow skin/eyes, severe nausea, right-upper abdominal pain, dark urine (possible hepatitis)
- Severe rash, blistering skin, mouth sores (possible severe skin reaction)
- Severe headache, vision changes, confusion, marked fatigue, dizziness, fainting, unusual thirst/urination, or cold/heat intolerance (possible endocrine or neurologic effects)

### Targeted therapies and hormone therapies

- Chest pain, shortness of breath, rapid or irregular heartbeat
- New severe headache or vision changes
- New or worsening high blood pressure symptoms (severe headache, chest pain)
- One-sided leg swelling/pain (possible clot)
- Severe rash or skin reactions
- Slow wound healing or new bleeding concerns

### Radiation therapy

- Sudden or progressive weakness, numbness, or balance problems (especially with spine radiation)
- New or worsening shortness of breath and cough weeks after chest radiation (possible radiation pneumonitis)
- Severe skin breakdown, open wounds, or signs of infection in irradiated areas
- Painful swallowing or inability to swallow fluids after head/neck or chest radiation

### Post-surgery

- Increasing redness, swelling, warmth, foul odor, or pus at the incision; wound opening
- Fever or chills after surgery
- Uncontrolled pain or new severe pain at/near the surgical site
- One-sided leg swelling/pain/redness (possible clot)
- Chest pain or shortness of breath
- Inability to pass urine, or no bowel movement with vomiting and abdominal swelling
- Stoma: sudden colour change (dark/black), no output with cramping, or leaking causing skin breakdown

### Mental health and cognitive changes

- Thoughts of self-harm or harming others — call emergency services or your local crisis line immediately
- New severe anxiety, panic, agitation, or hallucinations
- Sudden confusion, disorientation, or unusual drowsiness