

Cognitive Changes - Toolkit

Many people going through cancer treatment discuss cognitive changes, including difficulty with thinking, processing words, memory, concentration, and behavior changes.

Some people experience mild or severe cognitive changes that mostly improve with time or treatment.

Problems with thinking clearly, concentration, memory, processing words, forgetfulness, and multitasking is otherwise known as “Chemo Brain.”

We have gathered tips and advice from other Belongers to help you cope and manage the changes.

Tips for managing the cognitive changes:

- ❖ Discuss any changes in your thinking, memory, or behavior with the healthcare team. Some changes may be caused by another underlying condition, which may be treatable.
- ❖ Delirium (confused thinking) that may be caused due to certain medicines. Speak to the health care team if this occurs, they may change or stop the particular medication.
- ❖ Keep a record to track further changes or problems.
- ❖ Ask your family, friends, or caregiver to watch for additional problems.

“Chemo Brain”

- ❖ Let the people around you know you are experiencing these problems so they can support you.
- ❖ Keep a daily schedule “To do list” of things that require the most concentration.
- ❖ Stay organized. Take notes, make lists, highlight important dates on the calendar.
- ❖ Keep an organized, dated pillbox for your medication.
- ❖ Ensure you make time for physical activity, it can increase mental alertness.
- ❖ Avoid multi-tasking. Try to focus on one thing at a time.
- ❖ Try to avoid working in an environment with distractions.
- ❖ Develop a routine that works for you, helping you to stay on top of things.
- ❖ Ensure you get plenty of rest.
- ❖ Make sure you have a healthy diet.
- ❖ Adjust your routine to make it more suited to your needs and will benefit you.
- ❖ Stress and anxiety can add to cognitive changes. Practice relaxation techniques Yoga, meditation, deep breathing or try learning some cognitive behavior therapy techniques that help keep you balanced.

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