

Nursing Care Management

This section presents an overview of general nursing concepts that apply to most childhood cancers. Specific nursing care for children with a particular type of cancer is discussed under each disease section later in this chapter. This discussion focuses on the physical aspects of care. [Chapter 17](#) (chronic illness and terminal illness) presents the emotional aspects.

Quality Patient Outcomes: The Child with Cancer

- Child and family educated on disease and treatment
- Treatment administered on schedule with appropriate drug doses
- Side effects of treatment managed
- Treatment complications prevented
- Child and family coping skills supported
- Quality of life during treatment maintained
- Child and family adjusted to chronic illness
- Growth and development maintained during treatment

Signs and Symptoms of Cancer in Children

Early detection is critical to early treatment and eventual cure. Cancers in children are often difficult to recognize. Therefore, being alert to the persistence of unusual symptoms is essential (see [Box 25-1](#)). This section discusses some of the more significant clues to pediatric cancer.

Pain may be an early or late initial sign of cancer and requires a careful history of its onset, characteristics, location, intensity, and alleviating factors. Pain may be generalized or present at a specific location. For example, bone pain occurs in approximately 20% of children with leukemia. Pain, swelling, and tenderness at the tumor