

**Fever during cancer treatment is a serious symptom that requires immediate attention.**

The most common cause is infection, particularly because chemotherapy and other cancer treatments can lower your white blood cell count (neutropenia), weakening your immune system and making it harder to fight infections<sup>[15678](#)</sup>.

**Key points to know:**

- **A fever is defined as a temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher for at least one hour in people with cancer.** Some guidelines use 100.5°F (38°C) as the threshold<sup>[126](#)</sup>.
- **Infection is the most common cause, but fever can also result from inflammation, reactions to medications, or the cancer itself**<sup>[123](#)</sup>.
- **Fever may be the only sign of a serious infection** in people with low white blood cell counts<sup>[17](#)</sup>.
- **Neutropenic fever (fever with low white blood cells) is a medical emergency—**infections can become life-threatening very quickly in this situation<sup>[567](#)</sup>.

**What you should do:**

- **Contact your oncology team immediately if you develop a fever** during cancer treatment, especially if you are on chemotherapy<sup>[23567](#)</sup>.
- **Other symptoms to report urgently:** chills, shivering, weakness, pain, vomiting, diarrhea, shortness of breath, or other new or worsening symptoms<sup>[26](#)</sup>.
- **Do not wait to see if the fever goes away.** Early treatment is critical to prevent complications<sup>[367](#)</sup>.

**If you go to the emergency room, tell staff you are undergoing cancer treatment** so they can prioritize your care appropriately<sup>[6](#)</sup>.

**Summary:**

**Fever during cancer treatment is an emergency. Contact your healthcare team right away if your temperature is 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, even if you feel otherwise well.**

Prompt evaluation and treatment can be life-saving.

1. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/side-effects/infections/fever.html>
2. <https://www.roswellpark.org/cancertalk/202309/fever-rules-change-after-cancer-diagnosis>
3. <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/coping/physically/fever/what-is-fever>
4. <https://www.verywellhealth.com/chemo-fever-5204510>

5. <https://www.healthline.com/health/high-fever-after-chemotherapy>
6. <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/why-cancer-patients-should-take-fevers-seriously>
7. <https://www.cdc.gov/cancer-preventing-infections/patients/fever.html>
8. <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/coping/physically/fever/causes/infection/during-or-after-treatment>