


# **New patient guidelines on anemia and neutropenia**

May 3 2021

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# Anemia and Neutropenia

## Low Red and White Blood Cell Counts

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New NCCN Guidelines for Patients: Anemia and Neutropenia, Low Red and

White Blood Cell Counts now available for free at [NCCN.org/patientguidelines](https://www.nccn.org/patientguidelines).  
Credit: NCCN

The National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) announced today the publication of new NCCN Guidelines for Patients: Anemia and Neutropenia, Low Red and White Blood Cell Counts funded by the NCCN Foundation and endorsed by The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (LLS). The free information source is designed to help people living with cancer and caregivers recognize symptoms of blood cell deficiencies caused by cancer or chemotherapy—and increase engagement with their oncology care team about management and support.

Chemotherapy and certain cancers can slow the body's production of red blood cells (which carry oxygen), platelets (which help stop bleeding by forming blood clots) and [white blood cells](#) (which help protect against infection). Anemia, a deficiency of [red blood cells](#), can cause tiredness and headaches, while neutropenia and thrombocytopenia—a shortage of white blood cells and platelets, respectively—often go unnoticed before reaching severely low levels. Yet all three conditions can cause dangerous complications or require delays in [cancer treatment](#).

"Anemia made me tired and unmotivated, although I'm normally a high energy person," said 'Linda,' a 74-year-old survivor of chronic lymphocytic leukemia/small lymphocytic lymphoma from Seminole, Florida. "Frequent rests helped me meet my daily goals to get things done."

Elizabeth Griffiths, MD, Associate Professor at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, chairs the NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines (NCCN Guidelines) Panel for Hematopoietic Growth Factors

responsible for maintaining and updating the clinical guidelines from which the patient guidelines are derived.

"It's important for [patients](#) getting chemotherapy to be aware that there are supportive treatments, to learn about what they offer, and to know what to expect," Dr. Griffiths said. "Depending on the patient's situation, there are pluses and minuses for treatments like medications or growth factors, and the patient guidelines aim to present balanced information on these options in a patient-friendly manner."

There are several options available to help patients with anemia and neutropenia. Treatments can range from simple rest and careful monitoring, to medications or infusions of biological agents (growth factors) that help the body produce more blood cells.

The new NCCN Guidelines for Patients outline the causes of anemia and neutropenia as well as warning signs and potential management options that patients and caregivers can discuss with physicians. The publication offers important information in accessible, easy-to-understand language to help patients play an active role in their [cancer](#) care decisions. The patient guidelines are based on the renowned clinical NCCN Guidelines which are created by multidisciplinary teams of experts from across NCCN Member Institutions and used by health care professionals all over the world.

"These patient guidelines are designed to help educate patients so they can look out for potential problems and seek early intervention," said Vivek Roy, MD, Mayo Clinic Cancer Center, Vice-Chair of the NCCN Guidelines Panel for Hematopoietic Growth Factors. "While nurses and physicians do check for any potential issues, the patient can also be their own best advocate if they have the information."

"Anemia can have a profound impact on your daily life, but listening to

your body and communicating your symptoms to your treatment team can be pivotal," says Nikki Yuill, LCSW, Director of The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's Information Resource Center. "We are grateful that NCCN has developed a lay-friendly guide for patients."

## **NCCN Guidelines for Patients**

NCCN also recently published new NCCN Guidelines for Patients: Primary Cutaneous Lymphomas, which are a group of cancers where lymphocytes (a type of white [blood](#) cell) grow unchecked in the skin causing lesions. The new book provides information on treatment options that were previously addressed in a now-separate book for Mycosis Fungoides and Sézary Syndrome. Those two guides are part of the growing library that include 55 books for patients and caregivers from NCCN covering most major types of cancer, along with topics like managing cancer-related distress, nausea and vomiting, survivorship, and special considerations for adolescents and young adults across all cancer types. Free digital versions are available at [NCCN.org/patientguidelines](https://www.nccn.org/patientguidelines). Printed versions are available for a nominal fee at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

Learn more and help support these and other resources for people with cancer and their caregivers at [NCCN.org/patients](https://www.nccn.org/patients).

**More information:** [www.nccn.org/patientresources/.../delines-for-patients](https://www.nccn.org/patientresources/.../delines-for-patients)

Provided by National Comprehensive Cancer Network

Citation: New patient guidelines on anemia and neutropenia (2021, May 3) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-05-patient-guidelines-anemia-neutropenia.html>

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