

# How do you deal with chemo brain?

People who have cancer that's being treated with chemotherapy often report a condition called "chemo brain." Chemo brain is a sort of brain fog that makes it hard to remember things. It can slow your ability to process information and problem solve, too.

## Tips for cancer patients about to go through chemotherapy:

- **Avoid multitasking.**
- **Purchase a calendar, notepad or sticky notes** to write down appointments and other reminders for yourself.
- **Leave your cellphone in a place you can find it.**
- **Make shopping lists** so you get everything you came for when you go to the store.
- **Bring a friend or family to appointments** to help you remember the information and instructions you receive.
- **Get copies of tests and lab work** to make sure you have a record of everything. It may come in handy to help you remember everything that's been done, and it enables you to participate in your own care more effectively.
- **Use timers for cooking**, so you don't forget anything for too long in the oven or on the stove.
- **Repeat phrases to yourself to help remember them** – especially phrases that are important or new to you.
- **Get good sleep.** Your brain needs good quality rest as much as the rest of your body.
- **Keep active.** Activity is good for the mind and body.
- **Drink 2-3 quarts of fluid the day of treatment and for a few days after.** Good hydration provides some relief by helping flush the chemo out of your system more quickly, giving it less time to negatively impact your body. You want the chemo in, then you want it out as soon as it's done with its job.
- **Find classes for healing and stress reduction.** Stretch, balance and breathing classes, integrative therapy, cooking or painting classes or support groups – these can be a big help. Cancer patients have a lot of doctor visits, and the brain is receiving a lot of information and stress.
- **Take fish oil that has DHA**, which can increase the speed of brain function. You'll need to get it cleared by your physician first, though.

