

# Information Sheet:

## Cancer Treatment & Peripheral Neuropathy

Peripheral neuropathy refers to the nerves in your body being damaged. This can cause a feeling of pins and needles in your hands and feet.

You may have difficulty doing up buttons or picking up objects. You may have less strength or not feel hot and cold as well as you used to.

If damage continues to your nerves, you may have difficulty walking or working with your hands. It is best to tell your nurse and doctor if you are experiencing any of these things.

Changes in sensation usually build up over time and often will not disappear until several months after your chemotherapy has been completed.

### How can I manage my peripheral neuropathy?

- ❖ The most important thing to do if you experience any of the symptoms listed above is to tell your doctor.
- ❖ If you are experiencing pain, your doctor may be able to prescribe some pain medication.
- ❖ If you have numbness or tingling in your feet, take care when walking around. Remove rugs so that you do not trip and ensure that rooms are well lit.
- ❖ If you are unable to stand for long periods due to the tingling in your feet, you may find it helpful to use a chair in the shower.
- ❖ Use only warm water for bathing if your sensations of hot and cold have changed.
- ❖ Use potholders when you are cooking, as you may have trouble sensing extreme hot and cold.
- ❖ If you are having trouble using your hands to do up buttons or perform household chores, your nurse can refer you to an occupational therapist.
- ❖ Use gloves when doing household chores to protect you from injury.

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- ❖ In cold weather, wear warm clothes to protect your hands and feet from extreme cold.
- ❖ Use a non-skid bathmat when showering or bathing to prevent yourself from slipping.
- ❖ If you are driving, ensure you are able to feel the foot pedals, otherwise you may need to ask someone else to drive for you.

### Tell your Doctor or Nurse if:

- You experience any of these signs. Your doctor will want to keep an eye on you to see how much the symptoms are affecting you.

**We encourage you to speak with your healthcare team if you have any concerns about damage to your nerves during your treatment.**

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We welcome feedback at:

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The information in this brochure is intended as a guide to one of the services provided by BRHS and is correct at the time of publishing. Adapted from Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre brochure.

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**Bairnsdale Regional Health Service is located on the traditional land of the Gunai Kurnai people.**

*My team is* **BRHS**