Information for patients and families

Niagara Health System
Système De Santé De Niagara

Walker Family Cancer Centre

# Low Red Blood Count (Anemia)

**What you need to know and why:**

- There are 3 main types of cells in your blood, white cells, red cells and platelets.
- Red blood cells contain hemoglobin, which carries oxygen to the tissues of the body, for energy.
- Anemia is an abnormally low number of red cells, due to disease, chemotherapy or radiation treatment.
- Cancer and/or cancer treatment can decrease the number of red blood cells.
- If red cell counts are low, you may feel weak, short of breath or tired.

**What you need to watch for:**

- feeling tired or weak
- feeling dizzy, lightheaded, headaches
- shortness of breath

**Call if you have any of the symptoms listed above**

- Oncology Clinic - Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.: **905-682-6451**
- After hours and holidays call: **905-685-8082**

Treatment:

Your Oncologist will talk to you if you require a blood transfusion.
If anemic, rest, avoid heavy or strenuous exercise, take time when changing positions from sitting to standing, and eat a well-balanced diet.

Personal Notes / Reminders:

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