

An expanded acronym to be used in teaching patients, families, and medical personnel with limited knowledge and/or experience with neutropenia

THE 'WHITE' GLOVE TEACHING TOOL

FOLLOWING ARE SOME BASIC GUIDELINES FOR PROTECTION AGAINST INFECTION IN PATIENTS THAT ARE IMMUNOSUPPRESSED DUE TO A LOW WHITE BLOOD CELL COUNT

NEUTROPENIA = LOW WHITE BLOOD CELL COUNT = IMMUNOSUPPRESSION

WHEN YOUR WHITE COUNT IS LOW, YOU ARE MORE AT RISK FOR INFECTIONS

Wash your hands – this is the best way to prevent infection

White blood cells (neutrophils) are an indicator of your body's ability to fight infections

When will immunosuppression be done? As soon as your white blood count increases again

Hygiene – good personal hygiene – is the key to preventing an infection

How does the white count drop? Chemotherapy, radiation, surgery, specific disease

How important is this? impact on quality of life, cost-related issues, possible complications

Health Care Team – they are there to help you

Intervene early to prevent complications of infection

Information specific to your situation will be reviewed with you

Injections can sometimes be given to stimulate growth of white cells

Inform your friends and family that they will need to be careful – review specifics

Infection risk factors can be disease status; cause, length, and severity of neutropenia

Teaching you and your family to watch for signs of infection (fever, cough, and chills)

Tests (blood samples) to check your white blood cell count are done frequently

Temperature – take it and report it

Telephone if there are questions, concerns or new problems

Treatment may include antibiotics

Environment may need to be controlled or altered for certain periods of time

Eat no fresh fruit or vegetables when your counts are too low

Encourage your family and friends to take extra precautions (wash hands)

Explain that this is a preventive situation