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Educating Patients About Risk of Febrile Neutropenia Associated With Strong Chemotherapy

AJMC Staff

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More than 80% of patients with cancer who develop febrile neutropenia will be hospitalized. However, these patients may be unaware of the risk posed by this condition and may not ask important questions regarding it of their care team.

"While strong chemotherapy targets tumor cells that are rapidly dividing, what many patients don't realize is it can also affect other cells, including blood cells," said Edward George, MD, a medical oncologist, [said in a statement](#). "As an oncologist, a reduction of white blood cell count is one of my biggest concerns because it can leave patients susceptible to infection and hospitalization. This is a serious topic that patients need to be aware of so they can speak to their doctor about treatment options to help prevent it."

The campaign, At Home with Joan, is being led by Joan Lunden, a breast cancer survivor, advocate, and former co-host of ABC's Good Morning America. Lunden met with 4 breast cancer survivors who were also treated with strong chemotherapy and the campaign will tell their stories to inspire others with cancer to be an active participant in their treatment plan.

Treatment options such as Neulasta (pegfilgrastim) Onpro decrease the incidence of infection and can be applied the same day as the patient's chemotherapy appointment, explained Tina Pryor, RN, an oncology nurse, who participated in the At Home with Joan campaign.

"These patients want to get back to their normal life and recover in the comfort of their own home," Pryor said. "As a member of their support team, I want patients to know there are treatment options to help bring back that normalcy and comfort that frequent clinic and hospital visits interrupt."

The [At Home with Joan campaign](#) features conversations between Lunden and the breast cancer survivors on topics such as patients educating themselves about treatment options, why partnering with the healthcare team is critical, and patient experiences with treatment to reduce risk of infection.



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