

Hand-Foot Syndrome

Hand-foot syndrome is a condition that affects the skin on the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet. It can occur after treatment with some chemo drugs. It is most common with:

- Xeloda®.
- Adriamycin®.
- 5-FU.
- Doxil®.

Signs and Symptoms

The symptoms of hand-foot syndrome can range from mild discomfort to a painful sensation that stops you from doing your usual activities. It may be hard to pick up small things such as a pen or a fork. You may have trouble buttoning buttons. Some people have trouble walking.

You may have any of the following symptoms on your palms and soles.

- Dry, cracked, or peeling skin
- Mild redness that may become bright redness
- Stinging or tingling, particularly in the fingertips
- Pain or burning sensations
- Swelling
- Blistering

Signs and symptoms of the syndrome can begin three to six weeks after starting chemo. It depends on which drug you are on. Symptoms usually go away when the dose of the chemo is lowered or stopped. The skin begins to heal after a few weeks.

What To Do

Tell your doctor or nurse as soon as you begin to have any of the symptoms. Follow these suggestions to help you manage:

- If you develop any blisters, do not break them open.
- Keep your hands and feet well moisturized. Soak them in cool water for 10 minutes, pat them dry, and then apply a moisturizer such as Eucerin®.
- Do not soak in hot water and hot tubs.

- Try a lotion or cream that has petroleum in it. Some to try are:
 - Bag Balm®.
 - Udderly Smooth®.
 - Biafine® topical emulsion (or cream). Ask your doctor or nurse for a prescription.
- Do not wear socks, pantyhose, or shoes that fit too tightly.
- Do not do anything that would make you rub your palms or soles.
- Wear soft socks with all your shoes.
- Ask your doctor about taking vitamin B6.

If you have any questions or concerns, ask your doctor or nurse.

