

## Sexuality and hygiene during cancer treatments

Sexuality is an integral part of humanity and every person's fundamental right, even in the context of a serious illness. Falling ill with cancer, the sudden changes it causes in your life and the different treatment forms for cancer have a significant impact on aspects of your sexuality such as your body image or self-image. If you have questions about matters related to sexuality, you can turn to the treatment staff or your doctor. A sex therapist is also available. Don't hesitate to discuss the matter with the staff treating you.

- Cancer and its treatment can impact your self-image, either temporarily or permanently.
- Loss of sexual desire is common in both men and women.
- Erectile dysfunction is common in men with cancer. You can discuss medication for erectile dysfunction with your doctor as needed.
- Use of condoms or a dental dam is recommended throughout every treatment period. This will protect your partner from the bodily fluids containing cytostatics and help prevent infections.
- Many cancer medicines and cancer therapies impact the health of your mucous membranes. Using hormone-free vaginal suppositories or creams on the genitals is recommended.
- Pain during intercourse and sex is possible. In case of pain, we recommend using water-based lubricant during intercourse and when using sex toys. Lubricants also protect your mucous membranes.
- Make sure to use contraception to prevent pregnancy during and after your cancer treatments.
- Hormonal changes are possible during cancer treatment. You can discuss the adverse effects of hormonal changes with your doctor.
- We recommend not swimming (in pools, natural waters) if you are receiving cancer treatments that weaken your immune system, such as cytostatics. Having a sauna is allowed when receiving cancer treatments.