

Preventing Peripheral Neuropathy

One way to prevent neuropathy is to limit blood circulation to the hands and feet during chemo.

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Wearing frozen or tight-fitting gloves during chemotherapy may help prevent painful peripheral neuropathy. Chemotherapy is effective for many types of cancer, but the medications can harm normal cells, leading to side effects. Taxane drugs are especially likely to cause peripheral neuropathy, or damage to nerves in the extremities, leading to symptoms such as pain or numbness. One way to prevent neuropathy is to limit blood circulation to the hands and feet during chemo.

The German POLAR study included 122 women undergoing treatment for breast cancer using paclitaxel (Taxol) or nab-paclitaxel (Abraxane). One group wore a frozen gel glove and the other wore two tight-fitting surgical gloves on one hand before, during and for a half hour after chemotherapy. In the cooling group, 29% experienced high-grade neuropathy in the treated hand compared with 50% in the untreated hand at one month. In the compression group, the corresponding rates were 24% versus 38%. While both methods worked, women found it harder to tolerate hand cooling. What's more, surgical gloves are cheap and readily available.

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<http://beta.docker.cancerhealth.com/article/preventing-peripheral-neuropathy>