

# Vasomotor Symptoms

*Vasomotor symptoms, which can include hot flashes, night sweats, and sleep disturbance, are common in cancer survivors. These symptoms can be caused by changes in the body's hormonal system, which can occur with certain cancer treatments. Talk with your health care provider if you are having any of these symptoms. There are ways to help manage them.*

Consider some of the following tips and lifestyle changes to cope with some of the most common vasomotor symptoms.

## Managing hot flashes

- **Avoid hot flash triggers:**
  - Stress, alcohol, caffeine, spicy food, hot showers, hot weather, overheated bedrooms
- **Keep your body temperature cool** with these strategies:
  - Wear loose clothing. Dress in layers.
  - Wear clothing made from natural fibers – not synthetic materials. Aim for natural fibers that absorb moisture from the skin and dry quickly.
  - Keep a bottle of cool water with you.
  - Keep a small fan at your desk or bedside table.
  - Keep a hand fan with you.
  - At the first sign of a hot flash: Splash your face with cold water; run cold water over your hands; or place a cold, wet washcloth against your neck.
  - Take a cool shower before bed.
  - Sleep on cotton sheets and with one foot sticking out from under the covers.
  - Use air conditioning or a ceiling fan to keep the room temperature cool.
- **Maintain a healthy body weight.**
- **Exercise regularly.**
- **Avoid smoking.**
- **Practice relaxation and stress reduction techniques**, such as yoga, meditation, or breathing exercises.

If these techniques are not helpful, talk with your health care provider about non-hormonal medication options.

## Sleep

Try these tips to establish a regular sleep schedule and routine:

- Wake up and go to bed at consistent times, even on weekends. Avoid naps.
- Relax before sleep by reading a book, listening to music, or taking a bath. Turn off the television, computer, and cell phone.
- Create a comfortable environment that supports sleep: dark, quiet, and cool.
- For relief of night sweats, try the strategies to stay cool listed under “managing hot flashes.”
- Use the bedroom only for sleep, sex, and sickness.
- Avoid caffeine late in the day, ideally 4-6 hours before bed.
- Keep a journal or notebook near your bed to write down your worries or to-do items that might keep you awake.

*This document is for informational purposes only. The content is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.*

## Adult Survivorship Program

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