

## Cancer-Related Cognitive Impairment (CRCI) or “Chemobrain”

Cancer-related cognitive impairment (CRCI), often referred to as "chemobrain," or “mental foginess” that can affect the ability to pay attention and remembering things such as people’s names, taking medicines and difficulty finding the right words. Cognitive changes in cancer patients are temporary in most cases and are expected to improve over time, often fading after treatment ends. These symptoms can impact a person's quality of life and fortunately, there are strategies to help compensate for these cognitive changes.

- **Get Organized:** Use large calendars, memory books, planners, to-do lists, set lots of reminders and alarms to keep track of appointments and tasks.
- Use acronyms, make connections between old and new information, break information into small “chunks,” and focus on one task at a time.
- **Self-instructions:** Talking yourself through a task step-by-step.
- **Create a Calm Zone:** Minimize distractions and clutter. Use earplugs if needed.
- Use sticky notes and highlighters to support visual attention and memory
- **Medication Smarts:** Use pill organizers and alarms. Keep an updated medication list.
- Other issues like anemia, fatigue, depression, or sleep problems can worsen chemo brain. Managing these can also improve your cognitive functioning.
- By implementing these strategies, individuals with CRCI can improve their cognitive function and enhance their quality of life.

**Key Considerations:** It’s essential to work with a healthcare team to evaluate and develop a comprehensive management plan. Individualized strategies are crucial, as CRCI can manifest differently in each person.

## Resources

Your cognitive health is important. To learn more or to get additional support, contact your oncology team by phone or send a MyChart message to get a referral for Psychology at Baptist MD Anderson or contact us at (904) 376-3800 Baptist Behavioral Health.

## Other resources

### American Cancer Society

- <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/side-effects.html>
- <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/side-effects/changes-in-mood-or-thinking/chemo-brain.html>

### Cancer Care

- <https://www.cancercare.org/publications/70-coping-with-chemo-brain-keeping-your-memory-sharp>