



In putting together Chemo Care Kits for Kids, take the time to talk about the “why” for each item. This learning portion of the project provides greater insight than just filling a bag with stuff. A simple conversation and explanation of why each of the items is included in the kit will go a long way in teaching others about the needs of kids going through chemotherapy. (Note: Not all side effects are listed here. Not all children experience the same side effects.)

*Side Effect:*

### **Bad taste in the mouth**

Some kids experience a bad taste their mouth. Some also find that metal utensils taste awful. One way to help with this is to use mints, lemon drops or lemonheads, gum, and ring pops. One practitioner mentioned that it is hard for some kids to taste food and that those kids like strongly flavored candy like Lemonheads. Using plastic utensils will prevent the bad taste that comes with using metal utensils.

### **Dry nails and skin**

Chemotherapy can really dry out skin and nails: leaving skin itchy, causing pain in the lips, and nails may even split. Lotion and lip balm help this discomfort. One mom mentioned that using nail polish helped her teenage daughter by keeping them from splitting and helped them look better.

### **Hair loss**

Depending on the type of treatment and how long it is, a child may experience hair loss. A fun, comfy cap can be helpful.

### **Susceptible to illness and germs**

Because chemotherapy reduces the number of white blood cells (the cells we need to fight infections in our body), kids are susceptible to germs more than ever. Minimizing and avoiding interactions with those who are sick, even with a “little” bug, is important. Hand sanitizer and wipes are very helpful for families keeping a keen eye on making sure that everyone in the family stays well.

### **Tiredness**

Being tired is a common side effect for kids going through chemotherapy. Because of this fatigue and the risk of catching illness from others, kids have to decrease their normal routines. Comfort items and activity items that are included in the kit are intended to provide distraction and comfort during this time when kids may feel excluded from things that their friends are doing.

*Chemo Care Kits for Kids will help with managing side effects from chemotherapy and in providing needed distractions for kids and their families during this stressful time. These items have been “Mom approved” by REAL moms that are currently helping their children conquer cancer.*