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How do you define chemotherapy-related febrile neutropenia?

Hi, my name is Donald Harvey. I am director of Phase I Clinical Trial Section at the Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University, and an assistant professor in the Department of Hematology and Medical Oncology. As part of my practice, I am frequently asked how one defines chemotherapy-related febrile neutropenia. Really, it is dependent upon both the degree of the fever, which typically is a single reading of 38.3 degrees or higher or a reading of 38 degrees that lasts for an hour or longer. Secondly, the neutropenia number that tends to be included in most definitions is less than 1,500, but really the key issue is the planned decline to less than 1,000 or even less than 500. So, really febrile neutropenia is defined as much by timing as it is by the degree of fever and by the actual neutrophil count. Certainly, the window of febrile neutropenia occurs most commonly in patients, for example, with solid tumors between the period of 7 and 14 days following chemotherapy. In hematologic malignancies, it may be slightly sooner and may persist for a longer period.