Managing Common Side Effects of CLL/SLL Drugs

Bloating/Gassiness
Avoid/limit gas-producing foods (beans, cabbage, etc.)
Take simethicone as needed
Maintain normal bowel habits
Heating pad on stomach
Increase activity

Constipation
Increase fluid intake
Increase fiber intake (vegetables, whole grains, fiber supplements)
Increase activity/exercise
Take over-the-counter stool softeners

Diarrhea
Increase fluid intake
Eat only bland or simple foods
Take over-the-counter antidiarrheals (loperamide/Imodium)
Notify your healthcare provider if you have frequent or persistent diarrhea

Fatigue/Tiredness
Eat a well-balanced diet regularly to improve energy levels
Light exercise such as walking
Take short naps during the day
Maintain a regular schedule

Headache
Increase caffeine & fluid intake
Take acetaminophen (Tylenol) per package instructions.
Notify your healthcare provider if headaches often occur when treatments are first started, and usually resolve with time.

Muscle & Joint Pain
Take acetaminophen (Tylenol) per package instructions.
Antihistamines (Allegra, Zyrtec, Claritin) may help reduce bone pain
Apply heat or ice to the affected area

Nail Changes
Brittle fingernails and nail-splitting is common with some CLL/SLL treatments
Increase Biotin in your diet
Apply clear, strengthening nail polish

Nausea & Vomiting
Modify diet to bland/simple foods
Eat small, frequent meals instead of large meals
Notify your healthcare provider if symptoms persist. Medication may be needed

Swelling
Elevate your legs at rest
Increase activity
Limit salt intake
Wear compression socks/stockings if not contraindicated due to another medical condition

This list represents only the most common and mild side effects and is not a complete list. For more information on managing side effects that are specific to each drug, click on the name of the drug within the CLL Medicine Cabinet. Contact your healthcare provider if you have further questions about managing side effects.