

Chemotherapy Safety

It is important for everyone to take precautions when storing, preparing or giving chemotherapy. Once chemotherapy medications are given, they pass through the body and are in blood, urine, stool, and vomit. Safety precautions should be followed when your child is receiving chemotherapy and for 48 hours after the last dose.

Intravenous Chemotherapy is given almost always at home by a visiting nurse through your child's central access tube located in the chest or arm.

Oral Chemotherapy is given by a caregiver by mouth or through a feeding tube in the form of pills, capsules, tablets or liquids. It is important to always read the label on the outside of the bottle and follow the directions for preparing the medication.

To safely prepare Oral Chemotherapy medications, follow these precautions:

- Anyone handling chemotherapy medications must wash their hands and put on disposable gloves to prepare and/or give oral chemotherapy medications.
- If you are, or may be pregnant, avoid handling or preparing these medications and take precautions to minimize contact with your child's bodily fluids during the time the medicine is being given and for 48 hours after.
- Place disposable cloth or paper towels on work surface (counter/table) when mixing any oral chemotherapy medication, emptying a capsule, or crushing or cutting tablets.
- When opening the capsule to be mixed with food or liquid, wear a mask and protective eyewear. Find a place that is free of air flow, away from a window or fan to prevent blowing the powder.
- Crush or cut the tablet with a pill crusher or cutter.
- Wash the surface and pill crusher or cutter with soap and water.
- Keep these medications away from areas where food is prepared and out of reach of children and pets.
- All expired and/or unused oral chemotherapy should be placed in a sealed plastic bag and returned to the pharmacy in which the medication was dispensed or the Jimmy Fund Clinic.

Chemotherapy Safety

Chemotherapy (intravenous) medications that are given through an IV:

Intravenous Chemotherapy is given through an intravenous tube almost always at home by a visiting nurse.

- A new pair of medical gloves should always be worn when touching IV chemotherapy medicines, infusion pumps and equipment for flushing IV lines.
- If IV tubing becomes loose or disconnected, a pair of gloves should be worn and clamp the IV tubing. A call should be placed to your healthcare provider and/or the homecare company.
- Gloves, bags and tubing containing chemotherapy should always be placed in a plastic chemotherapy waste bag or container provided by the company who supplied the infusion pump.
- All expired and/or unused chemotherapy should be placed in a sealed plastic bag and be returned to the company who supplied the infusion pump.

Everyone caring for your child while he/she is receiving chemotherapy should take the following precautions for 48 hours after the last dose of chemotherapy:

- Wear gloves in disposing of urinal and commode waste. Wash hands with soap and water after removal of gloves.
- Close the lid and flush the toilet twice to prevent possible spray/splash of chemotherapy.
- Wear gloves when handling diapers. Diapers should be placed in a separate bag and thrown away with regular trash.
- Pregnant caregivers should not handle patient body waste.

Eye Contact with Chemotherapy Medication

If chemotherapy comes in contact with the eye, irritation may occur.

- Rinse the eye with large amounts of water for 15 minutes.
- Contact your doctor if irritation or redness develops.

Skin Contact with Chemotherapy Medication

If chemotherapy comes in contact with the skin, irritation or rash may occur.

- Put on medical gloves.
- Wash the skin thoroughly with soap and water for 15 minutes.
- Contact your doctor if irritation or redness develops.

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Clothing or Bedding that Comes in Contact with Chemotherapy Medication or Body Fluids

- Put on medical gloves.
- Remove all clothing.
- Immediately place the items in the washer separate from other laundry. If you do not have a washer, place the laundry in a plastic bag until it can be washed.
- Consider using a plastic cover to protect your mattress.

Chemotherapy Medication Spills on the Floor or Other Surfaces

- Put on medical gloves.
- Keep people and pets away from the spill until the clean up is finished.
- Use wet (with water) paper towels for cleaning powder spills.
- Use a dry paper towel for liquids.
- Wash the area thoroughly with soap or other household cleaner.
- Place all paper towels used to clean up the spill and any additional supplies used to wash the area in a plastic bag. It can be disposed of with regular trash once in separate bag.
- Remove gloves while avoiding contact with the skin and place in a plastic bag.
- Wash hands with soap and water.

Contact Us

For patient care assistance, please call the following phone numbers:

- Jimmy Fund Clinic (617) 632-3270
Business Hours 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday
- Page Operator (617) 632-3352
Off hours: weekdays after 5 p.m., holidays, and weekends
Page pediatric hematology/oncology or fellow on call
- Life Threatening Emergencies dial 911