

INFORMATION ABOUT HANDLING CHEMOTHERAPY MEDICATIONS



Chemotherapy and some of the other medications used in your child's treatment are very strong medicines. These medicines may pose a health hazard to both patients and caregivers and should be handled with care.

In hospital, you will notice the staff who handle chemotherapy medicines will wear gloves and other protective clothing.

WHAT SHOULD I DO AT HOME?

- Take care when handling chemotherapy medicine and try to prevent it from touching your skin. If your skin does come into contact with the medicine, wash the area of contact immediately.
- It is suggested to wear gloves whilst handling chemotherapy medication. After removing gloves, always wash your hands thoroughly.
- Pregnant and/or breastfeeding women and women and men planning a pregnancy should avoid handling chemotherapy where possible. If unavoidable, always wear gloves and wash hands thoroughly.
- Prepare a clean area where the medication can be handled safely (away from food preparation areas and air vents/fans). Place a waterproof disposable mat or several layers of paper towel under the area in case spills occur.
- Chemotherapy medication shouldn't be crushed as the powder which results can be easily inhaled. Contact your pharmacist for advice if your child cannot swallow medication whole.
- Any equipment (e.g. tablet cutters, syringes, medicine cups) used for the administration of chemotherapy medicines should be washed with warm soapy water and paper towel and left to air dry. Do not use this equipment with any other medications.

STORAGE OF MEDICATIONS

- Keep all medications out of the reach of children.
- A locked cupboard stored out of reach of children is a good place to store medicines.
- Check if any specific storage instructions are required (such as storing in the refrigerator).
- Do not store medicines in the bathroom, on a window sill or in the car as heat and dampness can destroy some medicines.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU FORGET A DOSE, OR IF YOUR CHILD VOMITS IMMEDIATELY AFTER A DOSE OF CHEMOTHERAPY

Contact your child's treating centre:

The Royal Children's Hospital Children's Cancer Centre (Oncology Pharmacy)

Please call the Children's Cancer Centre on (03) 9345 4545.

During business hours, select to speak to Oncology Pharmacy.

After hours, select to speak to the Kookaburra Associate Unit Manager (AUM).

Monash Children's Hospital Cancer Centre (Paediatric Oncology pharmacist)

During business hours contact the oncology pharmacist on (03) 8572 3464 or the Children's Cancer Centre on (03) 8572 3456

After hours ring the switch board on (03) 9597 6666 and page the on-call paediatric registrar.

INFORMATION ON CHEMOTHERAPY MEDICATIONS

- Information regarding chemotherapy medications and how to administer them will be given to you by your hospital's oncology pharmacist.
- If you would like further information on chemotherapy medicines please ask your pharmacist for the consumer medicine information (CMI) or the parent medication information sheet.

CONTACT

For further information, or to discuss any concerns you may have about your child's medication, please feel free to contact the Children's Cancer Centre of your child's treating hospital:

- The Royal Children's Hospital Oncology Pharmacy (03) 9345 6290
- Monash Children's Hospital Cancer Centre (03) 8572 3456 or Pharmacist desk (03) 8572 3464

Disclaimer: This information has been prepared by the Paediatric Integrated Cancer Service, with input from the Children's Cancer Centre Pharmacy Departments at The Royal Children's Hospital and Monash Children's Hospital. This information is for educational purposes only and should not be seen as a substitute for advice from your doctor or other professional healthcare provider. If you have specific questions about the content of this information, or any other medical matter, it is recommended that you consult your doctor, pharmacist or other professional healthcare provider. This information is considered to be true and correct at the date of publication, however changes in circumstances after the time of publication may impact on the accuracy of this information.

Reviewed May 2021
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