

# PATIENT GUIDE TO SAFE HANDLING OF BODY FLUIDS AFTER CHEMOTHERAPY ADMINISTRATION



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*SPECIAL THANKS TO THE ONCOLOGY NURSES AND PATIENTS.*

#### Disclaimer

This information provided in this pamphlet is for educational purpose. It should not be considered as medical advice. It is not to be used in place of a visit with a doctor, nurse or other healthcare professional. If you have questions about your individual medical situation, please consult with your healthcare professional.

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## Introduction

This pamphlet is designed to use as a guide to help patients, family members, and caregivers safely handle body fluids after chemotherapy administration.

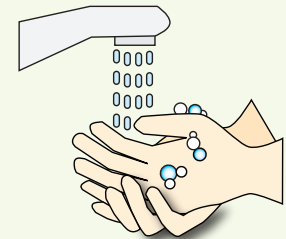


## Chemotherapy and body fluids

- Chemotherapy is a drug that destroys cancer cells. Although it is used to treat cancer, it can harm healthy cells in someone who does not have cancer if they come in contact with chemotherapy and they are not using proper protection.
- Chemotherapy leaves your body through body fluids such as urine, stool, vomit, saliva, sweat, semen and vaginal secretions.
- It can be found in your body fluids for up to 7 days after the last dose of chemotherapy treatment.
- It is important that you, your family members, and caregivers be very careful when handling your body fluids during treatment.

## Hand washing

- Hand washing is the best way to remove chemotherapy that comes in contact with your skin.
- Wash your hands before and after:
  - Eating
  - Preparing food
  - Going to the bathroom
  - Handling body fluids
  - Blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing on your hands



## Proper hand washing technique

- Wet your hands and wrists under running water.
  - Wash your hands with soap between your fingers, under your nails, over your palm and on the back of hands and wrists. Wash very well for at least 15 seconds.
  - Rinse your hands and wrists very well with water.
  - Dry your hands with a paper towel.
  - Turn off the faucet with a paper towel to keep your hands clean.
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## Wearing gloves

- Always wear gloves when doing the following tasks for someone who is having chemotherapy:
  - Handling body fluids
  - Cleaning the bathroom
  - Cleaning up spills of body fluids on surfaces
  - Doing the laundry
- The gloves must be powder-free, made of latex or latex free.
- You can buy gloves at your local pharmacy.
- Change your glove right away if it is torn, punctured, or soiled.
- Change your gloves after every 30 minutes of continuous use.
- Throw away the gloves after each use.
- Remember to wash your hands well with soap and water before wearing the gloves, and after taking them off.

## Handling body fluids

- Men should sit down on the toilet when peeing to prevent splashing.
- If you are using the bedpan or urinal: You or your caregiver should wear gloves when emptying the bedpan or urinal into the toilet.
- Flush the toilet twice with the lid closed after any use.
- Rinse the bedpan or urinal after each use, and wash it with household bleach and warm water once a day. When rinsing or washing, do it carefully to avoid splashing of any body fluids on your skin or eyes.
- Keep the bedpan and urinal in a place out of reach of children and pets.
- If you use a disposable diaper, when it becomes dirty change it right away and wash the surrounding skin well with soap and water.
- Put the dirty diaper in a sealed plastic bag before throwing it in the garbage.
- If you are a caregiver, wear gloves when washing the patient.
- If any body fluids come in contact with your skin or clothes, remove the clothes right away, and wash your skin for at least 15 seconds with soap and water, then pat dry. See laundry section for what to do with the clothes.
- Tell your doctor if your skin becomes red or irritated and it lasts for more than 1 hour.
- If any body fluids splash into your eyes:
  - Remove your contact lenses if you wear them.
  - Rinse your eyes for at least 15 minutes with water.
  - Rinse the contact lenses well with contact solution.
- Tell your doctor if your eye(s) become red or irritated and it lasts for more than 1 hour.

## Cleaning the bathroom and other surfaces

- Clean the toilet seat, lid, flush handle, floor around the toilet, sink, and faucets every day. Clean more often if there are any splashes of body fluid.
- You can use a bleach based cleaning product when cleaning the bathroom. It is best to use disposable cloths when cleaning. You should not use the same cloth for different surfaces. For example, use a cloth for the sink and another cloth for the toilet.
- If body fluids are spilled:
  - Put on gloves
  - Absorb the spill with a disposable cloth
  - Place the cloth in a sealed plastic bag
  - Dispose in the garbage
  - Clean the area with household bleach



## Doing the laundry

- Wear gloves when touching laundry, linens and bedding that are soiled with body fluid.
- Wash the contaminated laundry right away in a washing machine and separately from other regular laundry.
- You can use your usual washing detergents with warm or hot water.
- For heavily contaminated laundry, wash it twice.
- If a washing machine is not available, place the contaminated laundry in a plastic bag and close it securely (do not mix it with regular laundry). Try to wash it as soon as possible.
- If you do not have a control of your bladder or bowels, put a plastic sheet under the bed linens to protect the mattress.

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## Family members and children

- You can have normal contact with family members, children, and friends.
- Just make sure that you wash your hands before making direct contact with anyone.

## Sexual activity and pregnancy

- Talk to your doctor or nurse about how to safely start having sex again.
- It is best to avoid having sex during chemotherapy treatment and for 7 days after the end of your last cycle of chemotherapy treatment.
- If you have sex, men should use condoms for 7 days to protect yourself and your partner from being exposed to chemotherapy that is found in the semen and vaginal secretions. Women should use birth control to avoid getting pregnant.
- Pregnancy during chemotherapy treatment may cause you to lose your baby or it may cause birth defects. Talk to your doctor or nurse about when it is safe to get pregnant.
- Pregnant or nursing women should avoid direct contact and touching the body fluids of someone who is receiving chemotherapy treatment and for 7 days after the end of the last cycle of chemotherapy treatment.

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## Questions

- If you have other questions or concerns, you are welcomed to ask and talk to your nurse or doctor.

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