

Special Considerations When Using Chemotherapy

Chemotherapy is a treatment that uses medicines to destroy cancer cells. Chemotherapy can be administered in various ways including intravenous (IV), injection, orally, or applied to the skin. Not all chemotherapy acts the same or are used to treat all types of cancers. There may be specific guidance based on the type of chemotherapy administered but this reference document will provide overall guidance for consideration as you care for individuals receiving chemotherapy treatment.

There may be specific recommendations based on the oral chemotherapy agent administered. Here are some general recommendations when the patient is using **oral chemotherapy medications**:

- Wear gloves when touching pills or capsules.
- Don't repackage any oral chemotherapy medication without first discussing with the pharmacy.
- Discuss with the pharmacy the appropriate discarding practices for the medication container.
- Any excess medications may need to be returned to the pharmacy for appropriate disposal.

For at least 48 hours after chemotherapy treatments when using the bathroom:

- If possible, dedicate a toilet to the person receiving chemotherapy.
- If a dedicated toilet is not possible, the toilet seat must be cleaned with a sanitizing wipe after each use.
- Put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid splashing and flush the toilet twice after each use if the toilet is a low-volume flush. Keep the toilet lid closed when not in use.
- Sit on the toilet to cut down on urine splashing.
- If using disposable incontinent products, seal them in a leak-proof plastic bag and discard with trash.

If the patient vomits:

- If in the toilet, clean off all splashes along the seat and rim using a sanitizing wipe, then flush. Follow procedures noted above for flushing.
- If in a bucket or basin, carefully empty it into the toilet without splashing the contents. Wash the bucket or basin with hot, soapy water, and rinse it. Empty the wash and rinse water into the toilet, then flush.

Laundry:

- Any clothes or sheets that have body fluids on them should be washed in a machine and not by hand.
- Items should be washed separately and not with other laundry.
- Wash clothing twice in hot water with normal laundry detergent.
- If clothing cannot be washed immediately, place them in a container that can be sealed until they can be washed.

General Precautions:

- If a caregiver is assisting with any of the above, they should wear two-pairs of disposable gloves. Additional PPE such as a gown, eye protection, and face shield may be necessary based on the task completing.
- Ensure that the patient and the caregiver is completing hand hygiene after any contact with body fluids.