

Handling Chemotherapy Safely

Chemotherapy medicines, also called chemo, may be present in stool, urine, saliva, blood, mucus, vomit or drainage. Small amounts are also in vaginal and semen body fluids. To be safe, avoid contact with the chemo medicines and body waste and fluids. Follow these safety guidelines for 48 hours after each time you have chemo.

When you are given chemo, the staff may wear gloves, gowns, masks or goggles when handling chemotherapy, blood and body waste.

Avoid Contact with Body Waste

Follow these safety guidelines anytime you might touch body fluids or waste. This includes urine, stool, vomit, blood or containers that touch these such as the toilet, bedpan or ostomy bags.

- Buy latex or latex free gloves that are chemo safe at your local pharmacy.
- Wear the gloves when touching anything that has body fluids on or in it. Put gloves on before touching the toilet, bedpan, ostomy bag, diaper, bed sheets or pads. Wash your hands with the gloves on, then remove the gloves and wash your hands again.
- Men should sit down on the toilet.
- Empty body waste into the toilet. Empty it close to the water to limit splashing.
- Flush the toilet twice with the lid down.
- Clean containers after each use with soap and water. Rinse well.
- If you use diapers, use disposable diapers.
- Clean the toilet bowl in the usual manner. Clean up splashes with soap and water.
- Trash that has been soiled with medicine or body fluids or waste should be put in a leak-proof plastic bag. Then, put this bag in a second plastic bag.
- Wear gloves to throw away soiled trash. Wash your hands with the gloves on. Then remove the gloves and wash your hands again.

Laundry

- Wear gloves to handle laundry that has been soiled by body fluids.
- Place it in the washer without mixing with other laundry.
- Use normal detergent and hot or warm water.
- Wash this laundry right away. If this is not possible, put it in a plastic bag and wash it as soon you can.
- Wash your hands with the gloves on. Then remove the gloves and wash your hands again.

Spills

If body fluids splash or spill:

- Put on gloves.
- Soak up the spill with paper towels.
- Clean spill area with soap and water using paper towels. Rinse the area well with water.
- Throw away paper towels into a plastic bag. Then place that bag into another plastic bag.
- Wash your hands with the gloves on. Then remove the gloves and wash your hands again.

Skin and Eye Contact

If body fluids touch your skin or eyes:

- Wash your skin with soap and water for 5 minutes. Call your doctor if the skin stays red or irritated for more than one hour.
- Flush your eyes with water for 15 minutes. Call your doctor **right away**.

To prevent vaginal and semen fluids from touching your skin:

- Male patients or male partners of patients should wear a condom if sexual activity occurs in the 48 hours after chemo.

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.

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