

Safe Handling of Oral Therapy at Home

You are receiving an oral medication. Although the goal of the therapy is to treat your cancer, it may cause harm to normal body cells. Following the below instructions during treatment and for **48** hours after your last dose, will help keep yourself, the people around you, and the setting you live in as safe as possible.

Supplies

- Latex powder-free gloves
- If allergic to latex, then use latex-free gloves
- Leak-proof plastic bags or disposable container with lid

Storage

- Keep your medication in a safe place, out of the reach of children and pets.
- Label all containers
- Follow your nurse's or pharmacist's instructions for storage.
- If refrigeration is needed, store the medication in a separate leak-proof container. Place the container away from food. Do not put the medicine in or near the freezer.
- Do not store the medicine in the bathroom (too much moisture). Do not store in areas with temperatures that are very hot or very cold.

Handling Your Medication

- Do not crush, break or chew the pills. Swallow them whole.
- Only adults should handle the medicine.
- Do not touch the pills with your bare hands (unless you are administering the medication to yourself).
- Pregnant women and children should not handle your medication or body waste at any time.
- Wash your hands well with soap and water before and after handling the medication.
- Wear 2 pair of disposable gloves when handling. Never use torn gloves or gloves with small holes in them. Gloves are not necessary if you give the drug to yourself.
- Remove the used gloves and place them in the leak proof bags. Wash your hands after you remove the gloves.

Handling Body Waste

Follow safe handling guidelines during your chemo treatment and 48 hours after your last dose. A caregiver should wear gloves for any of the below activities, including touching toilets, bedside commodes, bedpans, vomit pans, urinals, ostomy bags or other body waste containers.

- Use the toilet as usual. When you're done, close the toilet lid and flush twice.
- Try to avoid splattering urine. Men should urinate sitting down.
- Wash your hands well with soap and water after you use the toilet.
- Keep toilets and restrooms clean. After cleaning, put the toilet lid down and flush twice.
- If you use diapers or bladder control products, use disposables. Place soiled items inside 2 sealable, leak-proof plastic bags for disposal. This is called "double-bagging."
- Empty body waste containers into the toilet. Pour close to the water to avoid splashing. Clean body waste containers after each use with soap and water. Rinse well.
- Ostomy bags need to be cleaned once a day and emptied as needed.
- Remove the gloves and put them inside 2 plastic bags. Seal the bags and throw them in the trash. Then wash your hands.

Handling Laundry

Wash your clothes or bed linens as usual unless they become soiled with chemo or body waste. Wash soiled laundry **separately** from other laundry items. Follow these instructions:

- Soiled laundry should be washed right away. If it can't be washed right away put it in a plastic bag. Wash it as soon as possible.
- Wear 2 pairs of gloves to handle soiled laundry. Carry the soiled laundry away from your body. Remove gloves and wash your hands. Wash body with soap and water if exposed to any of the soiled laundry.
- Use detergent and hot or warm water.

Handling Trash

Wear gloves to handle trash that contain pills or body waste. Wash your hands after you remove the gloves.

- Use the leak-proof plastic bag or container with lid for soiled trash.
- Seal the bag and then place this bag inside a larger leak-proof bag. Seal bags with ties or rubber bands when full. Seal containers with tape. Place in household trash.
- Label the bag "not for recycle."
- Keep trash away from children and pets.

Pregnancy/Sexual Activity

- If you are sexually active and of childbearing age you should use birth control during treatment. Your doctor can help you decide what kind is best for you.
- Do not breastfeed while on this therapy
- Most patients are able to continue sexual activity during chemo, but special precautions are

sometimes needed. Traces of your medication may be present in vaginal fluid and semen for days after you finish treatment. Ask your health care provider if you or your partner should use a condom.

Disposal of the Pills (Take Back Programs):

- To dispose your medication, call your city or county government's household trash and recycling service. Ask if a drug take-back program is offered in your community.
- Some counties have hazardous waste collection days. On these days prescription medicines are accepted, at a central location, to ensure proper disposal
- Information for local take back programs can be found at www.dea.gov

Resources

From the American Cancer Society:

<http://www.cancer.org/treatment/treatmentsandsideeffects/treatmenttypes/chemotherapy/oral-chemotherapy>