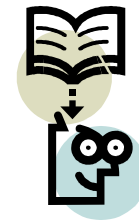


CYTOTOXIC PRECAUTIONS A GUIDE FOR PATIENTS & FAMILIES

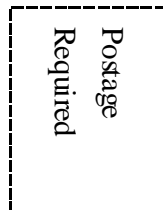
This guide has been prepared for patients who are taking cytotoxic medications.



Your health care team has put together this booklet so you know how to keep your loved ones safe.

Please ask us or your local Pharmacy
any questions you may have.

This booklet is available on the hospital's website at:
www.psfhdh.on.ca/visitinfo.htm



Perth and Smiths Falls
District Hospital
Attention: Manager, Quality
60 Cornelia Street, West
Smiths Falls, Ontario
K7A 2H9

What are Cytotoxic Precautions?

You are taking medication(s) called:

These medication(s) are considered to be cytotoxic. This means they are harmful to cells in the body. **Although your medication(s) will help you, they could cause problems for anyone who does not need it.** These precautions are only needed when handling your medications or bodily wastes.

Cytotoxic precautions may be new to you. They are used for the safety of those around you. Although the risk may be very low, it is important to be careful.

How long will I be on Cytotoxic Precautions?

You will need to be on precautions while you are taking the medication(s) and for a time after you stop taking them. The length of time the medication stays in your body depends on which medication(s) you are given.

You started your medication on: _____

You will be on cytotoxic precautions for _____ days after you finish your medication(s).

Please complete a short survey about this booklet.

We are committed to excellence in the provision of safe, high quality patient-focused care. In order to meet this commitment, we continuously seek feedback from our patients and their families.

You may leave this survey with a member of your care team or mail it to the address on the back of this page.

Questions: *Please check the correct response*

- 1) Did someone explain the purpose of the booklet to you?
Yes No Not sure
- 2) Did you read the booklet **before** going home?
Yes No Not sure
- 3) Did you find the information provided helpful?
Yes No Not sure
- 4) Did you share this booklet with your family?
Yes No Not sure
- 5) Did the booklet help you prepare for going home?
Yes No Not sure
- 6) What do you like about this booklet?

- 7) How could we make this booklet better?

Hand Hygiene

Washing with soap and water is the most important thing you and the people taking care of you can do to protect you from illnesses and infections. In addition to this, hand hygiene with alcohol gel is equally effective and faster, provided your hands are not soiled.

When Should You Wash Your Hands?

Wash your hands often and well. If you are unable to go to the sink, you can use alcohol hand gel. Remind care givers and visitors to wash their hands before touching or caring for you and when they leave your room.

Wash Your Hands Before You:

- Prepare or eat food
- Touch a cut or wound
- Tend to someone who is sick
- Touch any object or furniture in a patient's environment

Wash Your Hands After:

- Exposure to bodily fluids
- Go to the bathroom
- Blow your nose, cough or sneeze
- Handle garbage
- Tend to someone who is sick
- When hands are soiled for any other reasons

Notify your health care provider that you are taking a cytotoxic medication.

Cytotoxic medications provide benefit in treatment plans for cancer and other conditions. These medications are very powerful and precautions are recommended during and for a time after the last dose is given, to ensure that people and the environment are protected from accidental exposure.

Consult your pharmacist if you are unsure as to how long you will be on cytotoxic precautions.

While you are taking your medication (and for a time afterwards) notify all your healthcare providers that you are taking a cytotoxic medication.

This includes visits to:

- Emergency Room
- Hospital or Clinic appointments;
- Walk-in Clinic;
- Doctor's office;
- Dentist's office; and
- Visits from Home Care Nursing

Bring your medications, in their original bottles, with you to your appointments (when possible) and/or a list of all medications you are currently taking including over the counter medications and vitamins. Your pharmacist can help you prepare this list.

What is Hazardous Waste?

Hazards are anything that will cause someone harm or put someone in danger. This can include anything that is poisonous, flammable or can have chemical reactivity.

Waste is any unwanted material or product that is no longer useful.

Hazardous Waste is unwanted material or products that are no longer useful and will cause someone harm or put them in danger unless disposed of safely.

How does hazardous waste affect me and my family?

Repeated exposure to hazardous waste can be dangerous to the people who care for you. Research has shown that their bodies can absorb hazardous waste and they can suffer serious side effects.

This means that a person's bodily waste (urine, stool and vomit) is considered hazardous waste while taking cytotoxic medication and for a time after the medication is finished.

Consult your pharmacist if you are unsure as to how long you will be on cytotoxic precautions.

Do I need to do anything special with the dishes?

No. Wash them the normal way. You do not have to wash dishes separately.

What about the laundry?

Your caregiver should wear latex disposable gloves when washing items soiled with waste containing medication (urine, vomit and sweat for example). Soiled sheets and clothing should be washed alone first then washed again with the regular household wash. If you do not have a washer, place soiled items in a double plastic bag until they can be washed. Wash unsoiled linen in the normal way. Dispose of gloves after using once.

What about sex?

Being with your loved one is an important part of life. Hugging and kissing and being sexually active are all safe however, care needs to be taken. It is possible that traces of cytotoxic material are in vaginal fluid and semen. Therefore, it is recommended that a condom be used when having sex (vaginal, anal or oral) to prevent secretions from coming in contact with your partner's body.

Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

Avoid getting pregnant while on cytotoxic precautions. Pregnant women should not have direct contact with your medication or wastes. If you are breastfeeding, the medication can contaminate your breast milk. Talk to your doctor if you are breastfeeding while taking these medications.

Precautions for your care partner if he/she is giving medication.

If your care partner is giving your medication(s) it is important for him/her to wear disposable latex gloves. You can purchase latex gloves at the Pharmacy. Throw the disposal gloves in the regular garbage and then your partner should wash their hands.

How do I bring samples to the hospital?

You may need to bring urine, blood or other samples to the hospital for tests. These samples should be placed in a container with a tight fitting lid. Place the container in a sealed bag.

How do I store my medication?

Keep your medication(s) in a childproof container that will not leak, like a Tupperware container. Store it away from other medication(s) and food if possible. Keep it out of reach of children and pets.

Check the label to see if the drug should be kept in the fridge or away from light. If you have any unused medication, return it to the hospital or pharmacy.

Travelling with your medication

If you plan to travel with your medication discuss this with your pharmacist. The medication(s) should be stored in a container and kept at the correct temperature.

How does the medication leave my body?

Your body breaks down the medication. Most of it leaves your body in your urine. Your body fluids are considered cytotoxic or harmful when there is medication(s) in them. Here are other body fluids that may have small amounts of the medication(s):

- **bowel movements**
- **blood**
- **phlegm**
- **sweat**
- **semen**
- **vaginal fluid**
- **vomit**
- **saliva**
- **other discharges from your body**

How do I handle my bodily waste?

A large amount of medication(s) leaves your body in your urine. Before you flush the toilet, put the lid down. Flush twice. Wash your hands well. This is very important if you are sharing a bathroom.

Wash your skin right away if soiled with urine, bowel movements or other body waste. If you use a bedpan, urinal or commode, or are vomiting in a basin, have your caregiver wear disposable gloves when emptying the wastes. Rinse any equipment with soapy water after use. If others in the family are using the same equipment, wash it twice with dish detergent before use.

How to handle a spill and items soiled with bodily waste

Always wear disposable latex gloves when cleaning up a spill or handling items that may have been contaminated with bodily waste. Do not touch a spill with unprotected hands. Wash your hands after removing the gloves.

For surfaces, wipe with a paper towel or disposable rag. Use second paper towel or rag and wash well with soapy water. Use a fresh paper towel to rinse.

Wash out any non-disposable containers used to collect waste with soapy water.

Wash any waste that gets on your skin with soapy water. Waste water used in cleaning, laundry and washing can be poured down the sink or toilet.

What do I do with the garbage?

Cytotoxic precautions must be taken with items that may have your body fluids or medication on them.

Such as:

- dressings/bandages
- paper towels / toilet paper
- pads
- ostomy supplies
- gloves

Things you can not flush down the toilet should be placed in a plastic garbage bag, tied tightly and put in another plastic garbage bag.

Place the bag in your regular garbage container in a safe, secure place. The garbage container can be put out at the curb on your regular garbage pick up day. Keep garbage out of reach of children and pets.

Disposing of Syringes & Needles

If you are using sharps such as needles, syringes, IV equipment they need to be disposed of in a puncture-proof container like those used for ice cream or Javex.

Most pharmacies will accept used containers for disposal. Ask the pharmacy that supplied your syringes and needles if they do this.

Precautions to follow when taking your medications:

If your drugs come in separate packages:

- Tear open the package
- Take the prescribed dose
- Throw the wrapper in your regular garbage
- Wash your hands

If your drugs come in pharmacy bottles:

- Shake out the prescribed dose in your hand
- Take the prescribed dose
- Wash your hands