

Oral Chemotherapy safety at home

You have been given chemotherapy (Chemo) in the form of a pill. You will need to follow the tips in the “**Chemotherapy safety at home**” hand out. Oral chemo leaves the body in the same way as intravenous chemo.

You or others can be exposed to chemo by touching these pills. Chemo pills need to be handled safely even though the risk is low. Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding should avoid handling chemo pills.

How do I handle chemo pills or capsules?

- When you take your chemo, wash your hands before and afterwards
- If you are a caregiver or loved one, wash your hands before and after giving the chemo pills - even if you wore gloves
- Do not pick up chemo pills or capsules with your bare hands, wear disposable gloves, if possible. If it is not possible to wear disposable gloves, tap the medication from the bottle into a small cup, spoon or the bottle cap
- If you drop a pill or capsule, pick it up with a glove or tissue
- Keep your hands away from your eyes when handling chemo pills. If you accidentally touch your eye, flush the eye well with lukewarm tap water

How do I take my Oral Chemotherapy (chemo pills)?

It is important to take your chemo pills exactly as your doctor has instructed.

- Take your chemo pills by mouth. Swallow each tablet or capsule whole. Do not crush, chew or cut your chemo pills and do not open capsules
- Use a calendar to remind you to take your chemo pills on the right day
- Use an alarm to remind you to take your chemo pills at the right time of day
- Ask if you need to take your chemo pills on an empty stomach or with food

What if I miss a dose?

- If you miss taking one of your chemo pills, the Medication Information Sheet you were given may tell you what to do under the Heading "How it is given". If there are no instructions or you still have questions, please call the clinic
- If you vomit within 30 minutes of taking your pill call the clinic. Do not take an extra dose.

What if I take too many pills by mistake?

- Contact your doctor or nurse immediately

How do I store my chemo pills?

- Keep your chemo pills away from sunlight, in a cool, dry place (unless you are told differently)
- Keep your chemo pills in the original bottle or blister pack. Do not put them in bottles or pill reminder boxes with other medicines
- Store chemo drugs in an area free from moisture and extreme temperature (eg. bathrooms are rooms that have too much moisture in them)
- Keep your chemo pills away from children or pets

How do I safely get rid of chemo pills?

- Seal any unused, damaged or expired chemo pills in a resealable bag and return them to your pharmacy for safe disposal
- **DO NOT** throw in regular garbage
- **DO NOT** flush down toilet
- **DO NOT** flush down sink

What if a child/pet swallows my chemo pills by accident?

- **Take the child** and the pill bottle to the nearest hospital emergency room right away!
- **If a pet** swallows your chemo pills call your veterinarian