

# ORAL CHEMOTHERAPY EDUCATION



## SAFE HANDLING OF ORAL ANTICANCER THERAPY

### How should I handle my medication before I take it?

- Handle your oral anticancer therapy with care. Just like when chemotherapy is given into the vein, this medication can be toxic or affect others negatively, and exposure of the medication to others should be limited. Do not let someone who is pregnant or thinking of becoming pregnant handle the medication.
- Leave your anticancer therapy in the provided packaging until it is ready to be taken.
- Keep your anticancer therapy out of reach of children and pets.
- Never break, crush, chew, or open your tablets or capsules unless your healthcare team tells you to do so.
- Whenever possible, give your anticancer therapy to yourself and follow the steps below. If a family member, friend, or caregiver needs to give your anticancer therapy to you, they also need to follow these steps:
  - Wash hands with soap and water.
  - Put on gloves to avoid touching the medication. (Gloves are not necessary if you give the drug to yourself.)
  - Gently transfer the anticancer therapy from its package to a small medicine or other disposable cup.
  - Administer the medicine immediately by mouth with water.
  - Remove gloves and do not use them for anything else.
  - Throw gloves and medicine cup in household trash.
  - Wash hands with soap and water.

### How should my anticancer medication be stored?

- Store your medicine in a place with a controlled temperature that is not in direct sunlight. Make sure to look for any additional storage instructions for your medication. Some medications should be kept in the refrigerator. Ask your healthcare team if you have questions about storage instructions.
- Ask your healthcare team if a daily pill box or pill reminder may be used with your anticancer therapy.
- If you are traveling, put your anticancer therapy's packaging in a sealed plastic bag. Ask your pharmacist or healthcare team if any additional travel precautions are needed.

### What should I do with leftover medication if my treatment is changed or stopped?

- Do not put anticancer medication in the garbage\* or down the toilet.**
- Store your oral anticancer medication in a safe place until you can return it.
- State or local medication disposal sites or drop boxes are available.

### Handling body fluids and waste

Because this medicine remains in your body for several days after it is taken, some of the medication may be present in urine, stool, or vomit. Once you have started to take the medicine, it is important to follow the instructions below every day for as long as your treatment lasts. This is to keep yourself, loved ones, and the environment as safe as possible.

- Pregnant women should avoid touching anything that may be soiled with body fluids from the patient.
- Toilet and septic systems
  - You may use the same toilet, septic tank, and/or sewer that you usually use. If you have a low-flow toilet, close the lid and flush twice to ensure that all waste has been discarded.
  - If the toilet or toilet seat becomes soiled with urine, stool, or vomit, clean the surfaces before other people use the toilet.
  - Wash hands with soap and water after using the toilet.

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- ❑ If you do not have good control of bladder or bowels, use a disposable pad with a plastic back, a diaper, or a sheet to absorb body waste. If you need a bedpan, be sure your caregiver knows to wear gloves to assist with cleanup and to wash the bedpan with soap and water every day.
- ❑ Wash any skin that has been exposed to body waste or medicine with soap and water.
- ❑ Linens or clothing that are soiled with body fluids or body waste should be washed separately from other linens and clothing. If you do not have a washer, place the soiled linens in a plastic bag until they can be washed.
- ❑ Wash hands with soap and water after touching linens or clothing that may be soiled with body fluids.
- ❑ Special precautions may be needed for sexual activity while on anticancer therapy. Contact your healthcare team for instructions.

### Additional instructions

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\* If you need to dispose of oral anticancer drugs quickly, follow these instructions:

- ❑ Mix whole pills (do not crush or open) in used coffee grounds or cat litter.
- ❑ Place the mixture in a container (e.g., empty laundry detergent or bleach bottle) and put the lid on tightly. Alternatively, double bag the mixture in plastic storage bags.
- ❑ Place the sealed container in your household trash.

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