

Your Health Education

Safe Handling of Chemotherapy Waste Material

After chemotherapy treatment, the chemotherapy medication usually remains in the body for either 3 days or 7 days, depending upon its chemical properties. It is excreted in the urine, stool, vomit, semen, and vaginal secretions during this time. You must take the following precautions until _____ (Your nurse will write in the date).

Skin

If urine, stool, or vomit comes in contact with your hands or other body parts, wash the area immediately with soap and water. If caretakers have contact with your body wastes, they should wear latex gloves.

Toilet

Flush the toilet immediately. If you have young children or pets in the home that may have contact with the toilet, flush the toilet twice.

Bedpan, urinal, or emesis (vomit) basin

The caretaker should wear latex gloves when handling the container. After each use, empty and rinse the container well with water. At least once a day, put on latex gloves and wash the item with soap and water. Discard the gloves after each use, and then wash your hands with soap and water.

Diapers

If you need them, wear disposable diapers and/or use disposable bed pads. Caretakers should wear latex gloves when changing diapers or pads. For sanitary reasons and containment of odor, it is recommended that you "double bag" the waste by placing the soiled diapers or pads in a tied plastic bag or zip-lock bag, and then place this bag in a tied plastic trash bag. Discard the bag in the trash.

Linens and clothing

Wash linens that are soiled with urine, stool, or emesis as soon as possible. If you cannot wash them immediately, place them in a plastic bag and discard the bag in the trash after the linens are washed. The linens should be washed separately from your other linen, but it is not necessary to change your type of laundry powder or usual way of washing. Soiled linens should be washed a second time. They may be washed with other linens for the second washing. Unsoiled linens can be washed in the usual manner.

Ostomy care

Caretakers should wear latex gloves when emptying or changing the appliance. For sanitary reasons, soiled supplies are discarded by "double bagging." Place the waste first into a plastic tied bag or zip-lock bag, and then put this bag into another plastic bag and discard it in the trash.

Pregnant women

Pregnant women helping patients should avoid coming in contact with the patients' urine, stool, vomit, or semen during treatment and for the first 3 or 7 days after each chemotherapy treatment.

Sexual intercourse

The use of condoms is recommended for 3 or 7 days after therapy to protect your partner from exposure to chemotherapy medications in your body fluids.