Home Safety Precautions
After Injected and Infused Chemotherapy
For Patients and Caregivers

Most chemotherapy safety precautions involve prevention of contact with the chemotherapy drugs as they leave the patient’s body. It takes about 48 hours for the body to break down and/or get rid of most chemotherapy drugs. The byproducts of chemotherapy are excreted in body fluids such as urine, stool, tears, saliva, vomit, and semen or vaginal secretions. Both patients and caregivers should avoid contact with these fluids.

During chemotherapy and for the following 48 hours:

**The patient or caregiver assisting the patient should:**

- Always wash your hands with warm water and soap after using the toilet or after any contact with body fluids.
- Wear disposable waterproof gloves if you need to touch any body fluids. These gloves can be purchased at most local drugstores.
- Clean flatware and dishes thoroughly with soap and hot water and rinse well.
- Flush the toilet twice after using it. Put the lid down before flushing to avoid splashing. If possible, you might want to use a separate toilet during this time, especially if you have young children in your home.
- Both men and women should sit on the toilet to use it as this will cut down on splashing.
- If the patient is using disposable adult diapers, underwear or sanitary pads, seal them in plastic and throw them away with the regular trash.
- If you vomit into the toilet, clean off the toilet seat of any vomit or splashes and flush twice. If you vomit in a container, empty into the toilet and wash the bucket with hot, soapy warm water and rinse it, emptying the wash and rinse water into the toilet. Dry the bucket with paper towels and throw them away.
- Any clothes or sheets that have body fluids on them should be washed in a washing machine, not by hand. Wash them twice in hot water with regular laundry detergent. Do not wash them with other clothes. If they cannot be washed right away, seal them in a plastic bag.
- Use a condom during sex. As noted above, the drugs may be found in semen or vaginal secretions.
- As the drugs can be found in saliva, avoid deep kissing and sharing of food, drinks, straws or utensils.