

Safe Handling of Body Fluids after Chemo

Chemo drugs destroy cancer cells, but they can also harm healthy cells. After getting chemo, there may be small amounts of chemo in body fluids like saliva, urine, vomit, stool, semen and vaginal fluids. It's best if other people aren't exposed to these small amounts of chemo. This handout lists ways that you and your family can safely handle body fluids after chemo.



Follow these guidelines **for 7 days** after each IV chemo treatment.

If you take chemo pills (oral chemo), follow these guidelines at all times, even if you take a break from oral chemo. When you are done taking all of your oral chemo treatment, follow these guidelines for 7 days after your last dose.

Basic guidelines for handling body fluids

- Try to handle your own body fluids when you can. Other people should avoid contact with your body fluids when they can. If they must clean up body fluids, they should wear gloves. They also need to wear gloves when cleaning items that hold body fluids such as soiled clothing or linens, a bedside commode or basin for vomit.
- Don't let pregnant women or children touch body fluids or items that may contain chemo.
- You and anyone who touches your body fluids should wash their hands with soap and water afterwards.
- Wear gloves you can throw away when touching body fluids and soiled items. Don't use gloves with holes or tears. As you remove each glove, turn them inside out. Try not to touch the outside of the gloves. Wash hands with soap and water after taking off gloves.

In the bathroom

- Wash your hands well with soap and water after using the bathroom. Don't touch other items or surfaces until after you wash your hands.
- If you can, use your own bathroom. If you can't use your own bathroom, wipe the toilet seat and rim with a sanitizing wipe after each use. After cleaning, wash your hands with soap and water before touching anything. At the end of 7 days after treatment, wash the toilet and bathroom floor.
- If you have a low flow toilet, put the lid down and flush the toilet twice. This helps make sure body waste isn't left in the toilet.
- Use a toilet rather than a bedpan or urinal when you can. Wear gloves when cleaning these items, using soap and water after each use.



If your clothes or linens become soiled with urine, stool or vomit

- Wash soiled items in a washing machine right away. Don't wash soiled items with other clothing. Put them through the wash cycle twice using hot water and detergent.
- If you don't have access to a washing machine, placed soiled items in a sealed plastic bag until you can wash them.
- If you can, handle your own soiled items. If other people touch the soiled items, they should wear gloves and not let the items come in contact with their skin or clothing. If they do, wash them.



If you throw up

Wear gloves if you need to clean up vomit or empty a basin. Wash the basin with soap and water after each use.

If you don't have control of your bladder or bowels

Use throw-away plastic backed pads or diapers to absorb urine or stool. Wear gloves and change these items right away if they become soiled. Wash soiled skin gently with soap and water. Place any soiled diapers, plastic-backed pads and gloves in their own plastic bag before putting them in the regular trash.



If you have sex

Small amounts of chemo may be found in vaginal fluid or semen after chemo treatment. We do not know if these small amounts of chemo can harm a sexual partner. To help protect your partner, we recommend that you use a barrier during sex (vaginal, oral or anal).

If you have an ostomy

Caregivers need to wear gloves when they change or empty ostomy bags. Any ostomy supplies that can be thrown away, such as the bags or gloves, should be put in their own bag before putting them in the regular trash.

If you take chemo pills or get IV chemo in your home, you need to follow extra safety guidelines. Talk with your doctor or nurse to learn more.

This info is a general resource. It is not meant to replace your provider's advice. Ask your doctor or health care team any questions. Always follow their instructions.