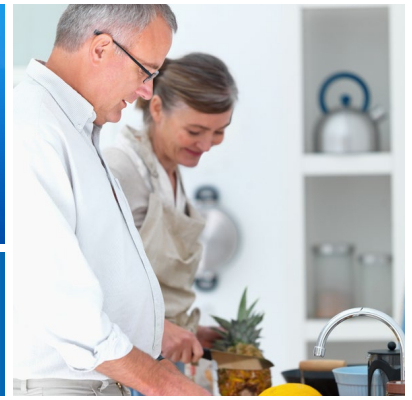


Precautions to take while receiving cancer treatments



You're soon going to be having chemotherapy or targeted therapy as a treatment for cancer. Here are some precautions you will need to take.



The measures described here should be followed for **4 days after each treatment**.

Why should I take special precautions?



These precautions are designed to prevent family members, friends or pets from coming into contact with residues from these medications.

CHEMOTHERAPY

This involves destroying cancer cells or slowing down their development (it destroys fast-growing cells).

TARGETED THERAPY

This targets and destroys specific elements of cancerous cells.

However, these drugs can also be toxic for other cells in your body. So you and those close to you need to be careful.

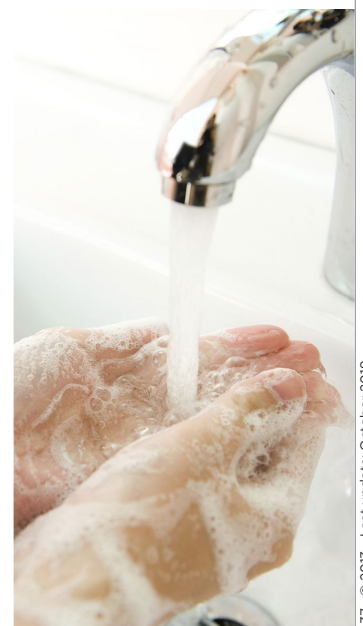
The medications you receive will stay in your body for several days. During that period, **all the fluids and secretions** you produce – vomit, urine, stools, vaginal secretions and sperm – will contain residues from the medication. Your body will eliminate them little by little. That's how your body eliminates them, little by little.

What precautions do you need to take?

Washing your hands

Hand washing is extremely important in order to avoid spreading medication residues. **Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially AFTER:**

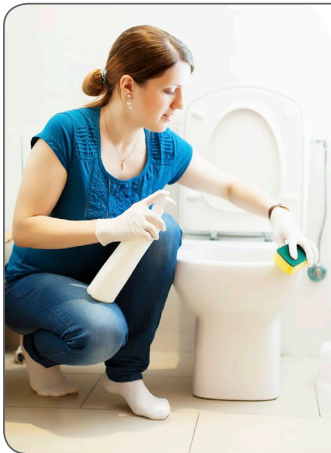
- > touching these medications
- > touching your body fluids (blood, urine, sperm, etc.)
- > going to the toilet



In the bathroom

- > Sit down to urinate to avoid splashing.
- > Fold down the toilet cover after each use.
- > Flush twice to make sure everything has gone down.
- > Every day, wash the rim of the toilet and the floor around it with all-purpose soap. If you have more than one toilet at home, ask the others in your family to use a different one from yours during the treatments.
- > Put incontinence underwear in the garbage, wrapped tightly in a plastic bag inserted in another plastic bag.

Keep in mind! When cleaning other surfaces in the house never reuse rags that were used to clean the toilet. This avoids spreading infections or residue from medication.



The person helping you must wear disposable gloves to touch the chemotherapy medication and to clean around the toilet and floor.

Laundry

You can continue to wash your clothing and bedding in the washing machine, but:

- > Wash separately clothing stained with urine, stools, vomit or medication. If the clothes are really dirty, wash them twice. If you can't wash them right away, place the clothes in a separate plastic bag, securely tied.
- > Wear gloves (like the ones you use to wash dishes) if you have to touch clothing stained with bodily fluids or medication. Don't use the same gloves for anything else - only for stained laundry.

Sexual relations

- > If you have sex during the **4 days** following your treatment, use a **condom**. Sperm and vaginal secretions may contain residue from medication.



> Contraception during treatment

As you know, it's important to avoid a pregnancy while you're receiving treatments, as they can be toxic for the fetus. If you're in a relationship and of reproductive age, choose and use a reliable contraceptive method as long as you are having treatments.

This also applies to partners of men who are being treated for cancer. Note that it is advisable to wait 6 months after the end of your treatments before trying to conceive. If you have concerns about this, talk to your doctor.



It's perfectly normal to feel tired after a treatment. Don't hesitate to ask for help with household chores, either from family or friends, or from a support group. If fatigue keeps you from doing your daily activities (eating, dressing, etc.), tell your care team.

Should your family and friends take any particular precautions?

If you're taking the precautions suggested here, it's perfectly safe for your family and friends to live with you or do things with you.

It's quite all right and not at all risky to:

- hug each other
- hold hands
- sleep in the same bed
- do things together



Precautions for family and friends

- > **If you're helping with household chores at the home of someone who's having chemo or targeted therapy:** your help is really important. Just make sure you follow the directives in this brochure.
- > **If you're pregnant or nursing:** it's preferable to avoid coming into contact with these medications and their residues. However, if you're taking care of someone who's being treated for cancer, there's no risk as long as **you follow the directives in this brochure to the letter.**

Where should I go for help or answers to my questions?

If you have questions, feel free to ask a member of your care team.



USEFUL RESOURCES

Other health sheets published by the CHUM are available. Ask for those that might fit your situation.



You can also find them on our web site chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante



NOTEPAD



Questions



Resource people and contacts

The content of this document in no way replaces the recommendations and diagnoses made, or the treatment suggested by your health professional.

To find out more about the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal
chumontreal.qc.ca