Dealing with a chemotherapy spillage

Information for patients
How to safely manage a chemotherapy spillage

It is possible to accidentally spill your chemotherapy when you are self-injecting, if the bag leaks, or if the connection between the pump and your line comes loose.

Keep this information, the spillage kit and instructions to hand when you have your chemotherapy pump attached or are giving yourself an injection of chemotherapy. Make sure your family members or carer know how to use the spillage kit.

If there is a spillage, follow the instructions in the spillage kit. Deal with any spillage that has gone onto your skin or clothes first, as it can damage your skin. Then deal with any spillage onto other surfaces.
What to do if there is a spillage

Restrict the spillage area immediately. Keep people out of the spillage area (especially children and pregnant women). If you need someone to help clear up the spillage, only have them help for the minimum time needed, working as quickly as possible.

Always take your chemotherapy spillage waste to the local Chemotherapy Unit for disposal. Community nurses, pharmacies, GP’s surgeries, etc. do not have the facilities to dispose of this.

How to use the spillage kit

Open the spillage kit away from the contaminated area.

Do not touch the contaminated area until the protective clothing supplied in the spillage kit has been put on. The essential items are:

- latex gloves
- blue protective gown, which should be tied around the waist
- face mask.

Skin

If chemotherapy has spilt on yours or someone else’s skin, immediately hold the affected area under cool, running water for 10 minutes. Do not scrub the skin, as unbroken skin provides protection.

Contact the Cancer and Haematology Centre Triage or the Haematology or Oncology Day Treatment Unit if there is any skin irritation after following this advice.

Eyes

If chemotherapy gets into one or both eyes, immediately wash the eyes with plenty of running water for at least 10 minutes.

Contact the Day Treatment Unit or Cancer and Haematology Triage immediately for further advice.
**Clothes**

It is best not to wear expensive or delicate fabrics when having your chemotherapy treatment, in case of a spillage.

If you spill the chemotherapy medication onto clothing, put on the gloves and face mask before removing the contaminated clothing. Then also put the blue gown on for further handling of the contaminated clothing.

If there is a small amount of the chemotherapy spilled onto clothes (such as a few drops from a disconnected line), the clothes should be washed twice, separately from non-contaminated clothing, on the hottest wash available in the washing machine.

If there is a large amount of fluid on the clothes (for example, if the bag is leaking or bursts), they should immediately be disposed of in the yellow plastic disposal bag. If a lot of liquid has seeped through the clothes onto skin underneath, follow the guidance for contact with skin and seek advice immediately from the Cancer and Haematology Centre Triage.

When all the spillage has been cleared up and the remaining chemotherapy contained, the protective gown and mask should be removed and placed into the plastic bag. Finally, the gloves should be removed and placed in the yellow plastic bag. The bag should then be sealed.

Contact the Day Treatment Unit or Cancer and Haematology Triage immediately for further advice.

**Carpet**

Clean the spillage from the outside inwards, to prevent the chemotherapy spreading further. Clear it up with the absorbent pad and towels and then wash the area with water. Vacuum once the carpet is dry (please do not use a steam cleaner).

If you’re not able to clear up the spillage immediately, make sure the area is avoided until the spillage has been dealt with. (The hospital will be able to give you another set of gloves, a mask and a protective gown, so that you can wash the area when you return home.)

Contact the Day Treatment Unit or Cancer and Haematology Triage immediately for further advice.
Spillage when using the CADD pump

Turn the pump off. Put on the protective equipment provided in the spillage kit.

If the spillage is within the bag that your CADD pump is held in, keep the pump attached to your central line. Follow the instructions for clearing up the spillage, depending on the surface it has come into contact with.

Place the whole CADD bag (blue backpack) into the large yellow plastic bag from the spillage kit.

If there has been any leakage from the CADD bag, use the absorbent material in the spillage pack to wipe this up and place this into the yellow bag as well. Put new gloves on and tie the top of the bag loosely.

Return to the hospital immediately with the yellow bag. Make sure you support the weight of the bag so it does not pull on your line. Someone else should drive you to the hospital, to prevent further spillage.

If you are able to, please call Cancer and Haematology Triage to tell them you are returning as you have had a spillage of chemotherapy.

Spillage from an infusion device or leakage from a line

If you notice a leak in either your line or at the connection to your central line, turn off the pump and clamp the infusion line, but keep it attached to your central line. Put on the protective blue gown, gloves and mask and place the whole CADD bag (blue backpack) into the large yellow plastic bag from the spillage kit.

Follow the instructions for clearing up the spillage, depending on the surface it has come into contact with.

Return to the hospital immediately. If you are able to, please call Cancer and Haematology Triage to tell them you are returning as you have had a spillage of chemotherapy.
Spillage when self-injecting chemotherapy

Follow the instructions for clearing up the spillage, depending on the surface it has come into contact with.

Contact the Cancer and Haematology Centre Triage or the Haematology or Oncology Day Treatment Unit to tell them about the spillage and to arrange for a replacement dose.

Contact details

If you are still unsure of what to do in the event of a spillage, please telephone the numbers below.

**Cancer and Haematology Centre Triage**
Tel: 01865 572 192
(24 hours)

**Ambulatory Care Unit**
Tel: 01865 226 513
(8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday)

**Haematology Day Treatment Unit**
Tel: 01865 235 554
(8.00am to 7.00pm, Monday to Friday)
(8.00am to 4.00pm, Saturday)

**Oncology Day Treatment Unit**
Tel: 01865 235 558
(8.00am to 7.00pm, Monday to Friday)
If you need an interpreter or would like this information leaflet in another format, such as Easy Read, large print, Braille, audio, electronically or another language, please speak to the department where you are being seen. You will find their contact details on your appointment letter.