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Having chemotherapy through an ambulatory pump

Introduction

This leaflet gives you information about using an ambulatory pump to receive chemotherapy treatment at home.

Please read this leaflet and keep it in a safe place so that you can read it again if you need to.

If you have any concerns or need more advice, please contact the Acute Oncology and Haematology Unit at Cheltenham General Hospital.

If you live in Hereford, please contact the Macmillan Renton Unit during normal working hours. Out of hours please contact the Acute Oncology and Haematology Unit at Cheltenham General Hospital. You will find the telephone numbers at the end of this leaflet.

Ambulatory pump information

Ambulatory pumps vary in shape and size depending on the make and also on the length of your treatment.

Inside the ambulatory pump is a soft balloon containing the chemotherapy. The tubing from the pump is attached via a connector into your arm or chest. This must always be connected by an experienced nurse who has been trained to handle chemotherapy. The disconnection can be done by an experienced chemotherapy nurse, a trained district or practice nurse or a relative/carer who has completed training from the Oncology Practice Development Team only.



Figure 1: Image of an ambulatory pump

The pump is lightweight and fits easily into a small bag or pouch. It can be carried around your waist, or attached to a belt or belt loop with a clip. The length of time that the pump will be connected will depend upon which chemotherapy treatment you are having. The shortest length of time for having this treatment is 24 hours, but it can be up to 1 week in some cases.

When using an ambulatory pump

- You should check your ambulatory pump regularly to make sure that your chemotherapy is flowing. Your pump is working if the balloon is getting smaller in size. There should be no kinks or twists in the tubing from the ambulatory pump as this could restrict the

flow of the chemotherapy. If there is a clamp on the tubing or infusion line, please make sure it is open. The connector will be positioned directly on your skin, as this gives the best flow.

- Please monitor the PICC site for any redness and the skin for any leaking/wetness/salt crystal collection.
- You should keep the pump at waist level; raising or lowering the pump may affect the flow rate. While you are sleeping the recommended position for the pump is on top of the bed covers or placed on a table beside the bed. Please note that if the pump is close to heat pads, placed under covers or under pillows, the pump may become too warm and this could affect the flow rate. If the pump is placed near cold packs, ice or exposed to the cold, this could also have an effect on the flow rate.
- Always protect the pump from sunlight, as exposure could affect the quality of the chemotherapy.
- If you accidently drop the pump, please make sure that there are no leaks or damage to the pump or the tubing. If there is damage or if it is leaking, please use the 'Spillage kit' and follow the instructions in this leaflet under the heading **'If you have a leakage from your pump'**. You should then contact the Acute Oncology and Haematology Unit immediately for advice.
- Always keep the pump and tubing away from sharp objects and take extra care if handling pets, due to the risk of knocking the pump out of position.

- Do not put the pump in water. Keep the pump outside the shower or bath by placing it in a waterproof bag or sleeve and covering the filter if there is one. Your nurse will tell you if there is a filter in place. While bathing or showering, make sure the pump stays at waist level; this will help to prevent any problems with the flow rate.
- If there is a filter on the tubing of the ambulatory pump, do not cover with tape, as this may interfere with the flow.
- After having treatment at the Oncology Unit please make sure that you always leave with a purple lidded/cytotoxic chemotherapy bin and disconnection/dressing packs to give to your district nurses.

Spillage kit

Leakage from your pump is very rare, but if this does happen, a chemotherapy spillage needs immediate attention.

You will have been given a ‘Spillage kit’ which contains:

- 2 large absorbent sheets
- 2 plastic aprons
- 2 pair’s disposable gloves
- 2 orange bags
- 1 clamp

If you have a leakage from your pump:

- Open your ‘Spillage kit’
- Put on **both pairs** of gloves and the apron **before** touching the carrying pouch which holds the pump
- Lay the absorbent sheet on a flat surface
- Take the pump from the carrying pouch, being careful to hold it over the absorbent sheet
- Put the clamp onto the tubing to seal off the chemotherapy liquid
- Wrap the pump in the absorbent sheet
- Place it into the orange bag provided
- **Do not** disconnect the pump line from the line in your arm or chest
- Remove your gloves and apron and wash your hands.
- **Contact the Acute Oncology and Haematology Unit**

If the chemotherapy spills on to your skin:

- Open your ‘Spillage kit’ and put on **both pairs** of gloves
- Wash your skin with plenty of cool, soapy water
- Take off any clothes that have been splashed and machine wash, at least 60 degrees, twice

- Take off the gloves and apron and place them inside the orange bag provided
- Close the plastic bag and dispose of it in a purple lidded/cytotoxic chemotherapy bin. Make sure that the bin is tightly closed then take it back to your Oncology Centre. Wash your hands with plenty of cool, soapy water

If chemotherapy spills onto your furniture or floor

- Put on **both pairs** of gloves and the apron from the 'Spillage Kit' before touching the carrying pouch which holds the pump
- With gloved hands, place the absorbent sheet over the affected area to soak up the spillage and to stop the spill from spreading
- Clean the splashed furniture/floor at least 3 times with hot soapy water
- Place all absorbent sheets, gloves and any materials used to clean up the spillage inside the orange bag provided
- Close the orange bag. This orange bag **must** be placed into the purple lidded/cytotoxic chemotherapy bin provided and taken back to your Oncology Centre. In order to comply with waste regulations, orange bags or items exposed to chemotherapy **must not** be placed in a domestic waste/dustbin
- Wash your hands with plenty of cool, soapy water

For further advice please contact the Acute Oncology and Haematology Unit.

Contact information

Acute Oncology and Haematology Unit

Cheltenham General Hospital
Tel: 0300 422 3444 (24hrs)

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