

This handout provides tips to safely handle cancer medication at home. By working safely with these drugs you can lessen the chance of exposure for yourself, family, friends, caregivers and the environment while you are receiving treatment.

You are being treated with a drug(s) called: Fluorouracil (5FU). Safety precautions are necessary when receiving this treatment.

Your INFUSOR™, the portable infusion pump that delivers your treatment, will have a sticker that says cytotoxic on it. This will warn others that the contents can be harmful.

The INFUSOR™ is filled with 5FU, and immediately starts delivering medication once it is connected to your PICC/PORT. The “balloon” consistently deflates gently pushing medication through your intravenous (IV) tube into your PICC/PORT and will continue until it is empty or disconnected.



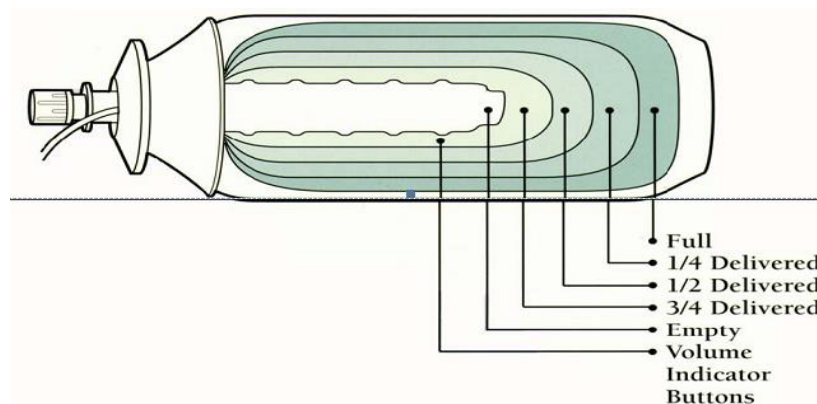
Your nurse will instruct you as to what coloured pump top will be attached, and provide you with an information sheet.

You must wear your INFUSOR™ at all times, the cancer centre or the Community Oncology Program of Saskatchewan (COPS) nurse will provide you with the approximate time your pump is due to be finished and make arrangements for you to have it disconnected upon completion.

What do I need to be aware of when the pump is on?

Since the INFUSOR™ delivers medication at a slow rate the balloon reservoir will appear to be shrinking over several hours or days. Ensure that the IV tubing is not clamped or kinked.

Watch the progression lines on the INFUSOR™ to monitor progress, when the infusion is complete the balloon is deflated and all indicator bumps are clearly visible.



How should I carry my INFUSOR™?

Carry the INFUSOR™ using a carrying case/pouch as close as possible to the same level as your PICC/PORT. The device can be placed on its side under your pillow while you sleep.

Your INFUSOR™ should be kept at room temperature. Keep it away from heat, sunlight and moisture. The connector should always be taped to your skin to make sure the medication is flowing into your PORT/PICC.

Do not try to open, remove, replace, or manipulate any pieces on the INFUSOR™. Avoid the use of sharp objects around or near the INFUSOR™ and tubing.

What should I expect to receive with my INFUSOR™?

You will receive a spill kit with the INFUSOR™ that includes:

- Four pairs of blue gloves
- Two blue absorbent pads
- One medium clear re-sealable poly bag with the cytotoxic label
- One large clear re-sealable poly bag

What activities am I able to do with my INFUSOR™?

Bathing:

- The INFUSOR™ should not be submerged or exposed to a direct stream of water. Place the INFUSOR™ in a plastic bag or on a flat surface outside of the shower or bath.

Exercise:

- It is acceptable to exercise with the INFUSOR™ as long as it remains close to room temperature and is not exposed to water.

Pets:

- The INFUSOR™ is safe to use around pets, but ensure that the tubing is protected so that animals cannot chew or play with it

Travel:

- It is safe to travel on planes that have a pressurized cabin, talk to your nurse if you plan to travel.

What should I do if my INFUSOR™ leaks or spills?

If your INFUSOR™ is leaking or the balloon has burst, pinch the tubing shut with the clamp provided on the tubing. If you have a PORT also clamp the port tubing.

Place the INFUSOR™ in a sealed plastic bag, immediately wash your hands with soap and warm water. Follow the instructions in this guide for coming in contact with body fluids and if there is an accidental spill contact your healthcare team immediately.

What are hazardous drug precautions?

Hazardous drug precautions are used to make sure that other people do not come in contact with your cancer medication or body fluids. Although the risk is very low, it is important to be careful.

Casual contact (hugging, kissing, and touching) is safe. Family, friends and caregivers who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or trying to get pregnant can be near you. But, they should use extra care to avoid contact with your body fluids.

Follow these hazardous precautions for 48 hours after your INFUSOR has been removed.

What body fluids do I need to be careful with?

Body fluids such as blood, bowel movements, urine, vomit, semen, and vaginal fluids may contain small amounts of your cancer medication. All of these fluids require careful handling

What if I come into contact with body fluid/waste?

Wash the area well with warm water and soap. Repeat several times. A single, accidental exposure will not likely have any serious effects but further contact with body fluid should be avoided.

Discuss the exposure with a family healthcare provider during your next scheduled visit.

How do I handle my body fluids to keep everyone safe?

You may use the toilet (septic tank or sewer) as usual. Put the lid down and then flush. Flush the toilet until all waste is cleared. Wash your hands well with soap and water after using the toilet.

If you use a bedpan, urinal, or commode or are vomiting in a basin, your caregiver must wear two pairs of disposable gloves when emptying the wastes into the toilet. Rinse any equipment with water after use. Wash the container with soap and hot water. Waste water used in cleaning can be carefully poured down the toilet.

If you do not have control of your bladder or bowels use a disposable diaper and a plastic backed absorbent pad to absorb urine or bowel movements. When soiled, change right away and wash your skin with soap and water. Use a moisture barrier on skin to protect from irritation.

If you have an ostomy (surgically created opening in the body for the discharge of waste), you and your caregiver must wear two pairs of disposable gloves when emptying or changing equipment.

Do I need to wash my dishes separately from others?

It is safe to wash your dishes together with those others use.

What if my body fluids spill?

In the case of an accidental spill you or your caregiver should:

- Put on two pairs of disposable gloves.
- Clean up spills right away to prevent spread to other areas.
- Soak up as much of the spill as possible, using paper towels, toilet paper or disposable absorbent pads.
- Clean the area with soap and water, using paper towels/disposable cloths.
- Place soiled toilet paper in toilet, close lid, and then flush.
- Place soiled paper towels, absorbent pads, disposable cloths and gloves in a plastic bag, tie it tightly. Then place the bag into another bag, tie it tightly. This bag can go out with your regular garbage.
- Wash your hands with soap and water after disposing the trash and removing your gloves.

What do I do with the garbage?

Anything that may have come in contact with your body fluids or cancer treatment must be handled with care:

- Wear two pairs of gloves when handling anything soiled.
- Put things you cannot flush down the toilet in a garbage bag and tie it tightly. Put this bag in a second garbage bag and tie it tightly. Dispose of garbage directly into your garbage bin.
- Wash your hands, with soap and water, after removing gloves and disposing of the garbage.
- Keep all garbage out of reach of children and pets.

How should laundry soiled with my body fluids be cleaned?

You or your caregiver should wear disposable gloves when handling laundry soiled with your body fluids. Dispose of gloves after one use and wash hands with soap and water.

Wash laundry in a load separate from other laundry. Wash soiled laundry twice with regular detergent in a washing machine using hot water. Do not hand wash these items. If soiled laundry cannot be washed right away, place it in a plastic garbage bag. Put this bag in a second garbage bag and tie it tightly. Keep the soiled laundry separate from other items until it can be washed.

Can I have sex while receiving treatment?

Sexual activity is safe when care is taken to contain fluids.

Use a condom during all sexual activity (vaginal, anal or oral) to prevent body fluids from coming in contact with your partner, even if you are using other birth control methods. Kissing is safe.

Is it safe to have a baby while receiving treatment?

No. Some types of cancer treatment and other drugs can harm unborn babies. If either a man or a woman is taking cancer medication, pregnancy should be avoided for at least one year after completion of cancer treatment. Birth control pills alone may not be effective for contraception. It is important to discuss the most effective birth control method with your doctor.

Is it safe to breastfeed while receiving treatment?

No. Some types of cancer treatment and other drugs can be present in breast milk. If you are breastfeeding, talk to your doctor about the risks.

Family, friends or caregivers who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or trying to get pregnant should not have contact with your cancer treatment or body fluids.

How do I bring urine or other samples to the hospital?

You may need to bring samples to the hospital for tests. These samples should be placed in a container with a tight fitting lid and placed in a sealed bag.

Who should I talk to if I have questions about my treatment?

Your healthcare team are here to help you and to answer any questions you might have about your treatment and care. Please contact a member of your healthcare team if:

- The medication does not appear to be flowing as expected (the size of the “balloon” is not changing).
- The INFUSOR™ is leaking or the “balloon” has burst.
- The connector becomes detached from your skin, or if your PORT needle has dislodged from your PORT.
- The colored top is different from the first pump you had, or different from what is marked on your sheet.
- You use anything from your spill kit.
- You have any questions or concerns.

Contact:

- Allan Blair Cancer Centre (Regina): 306-766-2213
- Saskatoon Cancer Centre: 306-655-2662