

CHEMOTHERAPY SAFETY AT HOME¹

While chemotherapy is a powerful treatment for people with cancer, caregivers, family, and household members, as well as friends or visitors should avoid direct contact with the drugs.

Safe Handling of Spillage

- Prepare a spill kit consisting of
 - Incontinence pad or disposable cloth
 - Long thick household latex gloves
 - Plastic apron
 - Vomit bag/ bowl
 - Plastic bags
- Body fluids should be handled using a pair of latex gloves
- Use plenty of water and detergent when cleaning up spill area
- Avoid touching the external part of the gloves with bare hands when taking out the gloves. Always wash hands thoroughly thereafter.
- Do not keep chemotherapy medications in an organiser with other medicines. The hospital can help dispose any excess properly.
- Seal all soiled products in double bags before disposal.

Pregnant women, those who are breastfeeding, or those who are attempting to become pregnant should not handle any chemotherapy medications, bodily fluids, or clothing that has been stained with any by-products of chemotherapy.



FOOD AND DRUG INTERACTIONS²⁻⁷

There are certain foods and fruits that may interact with some medications. These can affect the efficacy of the cancer treatment. Other substances like alternative medicinal products, over-the-counter medicines, herbs and supplements may also interact with cancer medications. It is important that your care team is informed of what you take. They can advise you on the foods, supplements, etc., to avoid while taking cancer medications.

THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR WHEN EATING OUT⁷

Food safety is essential especially for people undergoing cancer treatment. Their immune systems may be weaker, increasing their risk of food-borne disease.

Here are some food safety precautions when choosing your food.

- Make certain that your meal is freshly prepared or cooked on the spot
- Stay away from precooked foods such as chicken rice, buffet, salad bars and mixed or “economy” rice, where food has been left outside for an extended amount of time
- Take meals that are fully cooked and well done
- Unpasteurized liquids, such as fruit juice and milk as well as milk products such as soft cheese and yoghurt made from unpasteurized milk, should be avoided
- Avoid eating raw or undercooked foods like sashimi and salad including raw sprouts like alfalfa
- Say no to chilled deli foods like pate, cold hot dogs, or lunch meat, including dry-cured uncooked salami and deli-prepared salads containing these as well as eggs or seafood
- Wash fruits and vegetables including those that you will peel

If you are unsure of how to select meals that are safe and suitable for you, check with your nurse or dietician.

SEX AND FERTILITY⁸⁻¹² INTIMACY

Your opportunities for intimacy with your partner may be affected by your treatment schedules. Beyond this, how you feel during the treatment may also affect your sexual behaviour. The way you perceive yourself and your body due to the physical changes from the effects of treatment, such as weight and hair loss, can also influence your sexual interest. You may also experience side effects due to treatment.

You may find cuddling, enjoying your time together or other forms of intimacy, can also strengthen your relationship. Talk to your care team about how to manage the different aspects of your sex life that are affected, which can be any of those below:

<p>EMOTIONAL</p>	<p>HORMONAL (SUBSTANCES IN THE BODY RESPONSIBLE FOR SEXUAL RESPONSE)</p>	<p>PHYSICAL ABILITY FOR SEXUAL PLEASURE</p>	<p>SOME TREATMENT EFFECTS LIKE PAIN, FATIGUE, NAUSEA, AND VOMITING</p>	<p>ERECTILE DISORDER (FOR MEN)</p>	<p>VAGINAL DRYNESS AND OTHER MENOPAUSAL SYMPTOMS (FOR WOMEN)</p>
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PREGNANCY AND BREASTFEEDING

Women should not become pregnant while on treatment as it may harm the baby. If abstinence is out of the question, barrier contraception such as condoms should be used during treatment.

Certain medications may not be taken while breastfeeding. If you are breast feeding, consult your doctor to see when you can continue breastfeeding after your chemotherapy.

FERTILITY

Since AML treatment has an impact on your fertility, talk to your doctor about ways to preserve your fertility and have them refer you for counselling and education.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR CARE TEAM

Your care team is there for you through your treatment journey. Have an open and honest conversation on the potential impact of your medical condition or your treatment on sex and intimacy. Consider discussing some of the points below:

- How will cancer or my treatment affect my desire or ability to engage in sex?
- Are there interventions that can help manage the sexual side effects of my treatment (if there is any)? What adjustments in my lifestyle can I make to maintain my sexual well-being?
- When can I resume my normal sexual activity?
- What precautions on sexual activity should I consider during or after treatment?
- What is the impact of cancer or my treatment on my fertility or my ability to have children? What are my options to preserve fertility?
- How do I talk to my partner on the potential effects of my condition or my treatment to our sexual relationship?
- Where can I get support or counselling regarding sexual health during my treatment journey?



FOR FURTHER SUPPORT, VISIT [LIVETHWITHAML.COM](https://www.livewithaml.com)

This leaflet is for patients in Singapore and Malaysia only, and has been created and funded by Astellas. It is provided for informational purposes only and does not constitute individual medical advice. If you have any questions or concerns about your medical condition or AML, ask your doctor

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