

Special handling requirements for oral cytotoxics and immunosuppressant medicines: information for families

This information sheet describes how oral cytotoxic and immunosuppressant medicines should be given and provides advice on how to handle these medicines safely.

It does not give specific information relating to individual medicines or describe their uses. For this information you must read the individual leaflets produced for the medicine that your child is taking. If you are concerned about anything in this leaflet, please ring one of the contact numbers below. Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you have more general queries or concerns.

How is the medicine given?

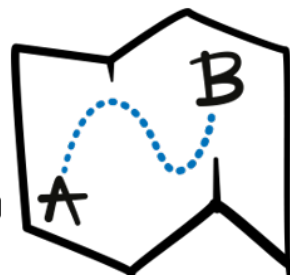
- If you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant or are breast feeding it is better to avoid handling these medicines if at all possible.
- Always wash your hands before and after handling any oral cytotoxic or immunosuppressant medicines.
- Ideally the tablets or capsules should be swallowed whole, and then washed down with plenty of liquid, at least a large glassful.
- Very rarely, it may be necessary to halve tablets to obtain the correct dose for your child. A tablet cutter must be used. These are available from the pharmacy department or your community pharmacy. Keep the tablet cutter for these medicines only.
- If you are cutting tablets, you should not touch them directly with your hands. You should wear a pair of household rubber gloves or use tweezers. Do not use these

for any other purpose. Ideally, you should work in the kitchen with just your child present.

- If your child cannot swallow tablets or capsules, a liquid preparation is usually available. If a liquid preparation is not available, instructions on how to give the tablets or capsules will be given in the information sheet for the individual medicine.

Getting rid of waste products

- Waste products include capsule shells, used paper towels, masks, vomit and dirty disposable nappies
- You may be given a yellow clinical waste bin so you can dispose of waste products that have come into contact with the medicine. At the end of each course or when the bin is three-quarters full, bring it to GOSH for disposal. Do not dispose in the household rubbish.



- If you have not been given a yellow clinical waste bin, waste products should be placed inside two rubbish bags and disposed of along with your normal rubbish.

paper. Clothing should be removed immediately and washed separately from other items. Used kitchen paper should be disposed of as described in the earlier section.

Accidental spillages

- If contact occurs with your skin, you must wash the area immediately, using plenty of water. If the skin is sore you should contact your GP (family doctor) for advice.
- If contact occurs with your eyes, wash immediately with plenty of water for at least ten minutes. If after this your eyes are sore you should go to your nearest Accident and Emergency (A+E) department.
- If you spill these medicines on the work surface or floor, wearing gloves, cover the spillage with kitchen paper. Wipe the area with water then clean with household cleaner and water. Used kitchen paper and other items used to clean up the spillage should be disposed of as described in the earlier section.
- If any of the medicine is spilt on clothing, the spill should be blotted dry with kitchen

If any type of spillage occurs you should contact GOSH for advice immediately.

Important

- Keep all medicines in a safe place where children cannot reach them.
- It is important to give medicines as directed by the doctor, nurse or pharmacist and at the right time.
- If your child vomits (is sick) after taking the medicine, tell their doctor or nurse, as another dose may be required, but do not give another dose without advice.
- If you forget to give your child their medicine, do not give them a double dose. Do tell their doctor or nurse, but keep to their regular dose schedule.
- If the doctor decides to stop treatment, return any remaining medicine to your pharmacist. Do not flush them down the toilet or throw them away.

Useful numbers

- GOSH switchboard 020 7405 9200
- Pharmacy medicines information 020 7829 8608 (Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm)

Disclaimer

Please read this information sheet from GOSH alongside the patient information leaflet (PIL) provided by the manufacturer. If you do not have a copy of the manufacturer's patient information leaflet please talk to your pharmacist. A few products do not have a marketing authorisation (licence) as a medicine and therefore there is no PIL.

For children in particular, there may be conflicts of information between the manufacturer's patient information leaflet (PIL) and guidance provided by GOSH and other healthcare providers. For example, some manufacturers may recommend, in the patient information leaflet, that a medicine is not given to children aged under 12 years. In most cases, this is because the manufacturer will recruit adults to clinical



trials in the first instance and therefore the initial marketing authorisation (licence) only covers adults and older children.

For new medicines, the manufacturer then has to recruit children and newborns into trials (unless the medicine is not going to be used in children and newborns) and subsequently amend the PIL with the approved information. Older medicines may have been used effectively for many years in children without problems but the manufacturer has not been required to collect data and amend the licence. This does not mean that it is unsafe for children and young people to be prescribed such a medicine 'off-licence/off-label'. However, if you are concerned about any conflicts of information, please discuss with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

