



Association for Radiologic & Imaging Nursing

CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINE

Personnel Dealing with Chemotherapy & Cytotoxic Medications

Overview

Radiology increasingly deals with chemotherapy and cytotoxic medications. Radiology nursing should require comprehensive care and consideration on dealing with the risks associated with these materials.

Target Audience

Radiology Nurses, Radiology Technologists, Radiologists, Radiology Administrators, Radiology Residents & Fellows, Medical Students

Nursing Considerations

A. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Patients who have received chemotherapy in the past 48 hours should have a “chemotherapy precautions” sign posted outside their door. If they come to Radiology this should be communicated to you on the SBAR form.
- Personnel dealing with blood, vomitus, or excreta from patients who have received chemo in the past 48 hours should wear chemotherapy approved gloves (**double gloves are recommended for all handling activities**), disposable chemotherapy gown and eye and face protection if splashing is expected.
- No protective equipment is needed for ordinary patient contact if you are not dealing with bodily excretions.
- Hands should be washed after removal of gloves or gown, and after contact with above substances. Also flush the toilet twice when disposing of urine, vomitus, feces, etc.

B. Linen

- Linen contaminated with chemotherapy should be placed in the institutional designated chemo hazardous waste container.
- Linen contaminated with body fluids from patients’ who have received chemotherapy in the past 48 hours may be bagged in a regular linen bag and placed with dirty linens to be laundered.

C. Accidental Exposure to chemotherapy agents (**Overt contamination of gloves or gown or direct skin or eye contact**)

- Immediately remove gloves or gown.
- Wash affected skin immediately with soap from clean supply room such as Ivory (**do not use Germicidal Cleanser i.e. Cida-State or soaps with Chlorhexidine Gluconate (CHG)**) and water. Report to Employee Health or the Emergency Department immediately if skin reaction occurs or follow your hospital policy guidelines.

- For eye exposure flush affected eye (s) with water or isotonic eyewash (saline) for a minimum of 15 minutes. Go to Employee Health or the Emergency Department once the flush is completed or follow your hospital policy guidelines.

D. Transporting Chemotherapy (Picking up chemotherapy from Pharmacy)

- All chemotherapy should be in a plastic bag that is sealed and marked as chemotherapy.
- You need to wear chemotherapy approved (sterile) gloves when carrying chemotherapy.
 - What do you do if you drop the chemotherapy and the bag with the chemotherapy splits or the glass breaks?
 - Call your unit or area for help and tell them to bring protective equipment, the “Chemo Spill Kit” and what ever else they think they need. (Your hospital may dictate a slightly different scenario, such as calling security)
 - Block off contaminated area.
 - Follow procedure for “large spills.”
 - Take a deep breath and try to remain calm. Accidents happen.
- When the chemotherapy arrives in the Radiology Department it needs to be put in a “Chemo Safe Zone” (placed on a chemo pad) until it is placed on the field, given to the team to administer, or the nurse hangs it for an infusion. The pad is to be disposed of in the chemotherapy waste bin.

E. Administration of Chemotherapy in the Radiology Department

- The chemotherapy should be placed on a separate table to decrease the risk of contamination.
- Use only plastic stopcocks during these procedures.
- All personnel must wear appropriate personal protective equipment when preparing and administering the chemotherapy. This includes:
 - A protective gown of low-permeability, lint free fabric with a solid front (back closure) and knit or elastic cuffs.
 - Disposable non-latex (nitrile) chemotherapy approved powder-free gloves. The permeability of the gloves increases with time, therefore gloves should be changed every 30 minutes, or immediately if they are damaged, torn or contaminated with the drug. **Double Glove prior to chemotherapy administration.**
 - A plastic face shield should be worn when the possibility of eye, mouth or nasal splashing or aerosolization exists.
 - A chemotherapy order form or approved pre-printed orders should be used to process chemotherapy orders.
 - Two individuals in the interventional radiology suite (i.e.2 RN’s or RN and MD) must verify the chemotherapy order prior to administration. The following is to be checked against the order: Patient Name, Medical Record Number or Date of Birth, Drug (s), Dose, Route, Date and Time, Solution and Expiration Date.
 - Both individuals involved in the checking process need to put their signature and correct date on the order sheet.
 - All empty chemotherapy tubing, bags, glass containers, or anything that has potentially come in contact with the chemotherapy agent should be disposed of in the chemotherapy waste bin. This includes bedpans or urinals that the patient may have used during the procedure.

NOTE: Please refer to your hospital policy regarding administration of chemotherapy. Your institution may require that two chemo certified RN's check the chemotherapy that is being administered via lumbar puncture or IA chemotherapy for brain tumors. The RN's also perform the charting, and handle the handoff and disposal.

F. Procedure for Clean-up of Spills

- Alert your supervisor (i.e. charge nurse or lead tech) that a spill has occurred.
- Spills should be cleaned up immediately by an RN or RT competent in chemo/cytotoxic spill procedures: wearing a disposable gown, double (2 pair) chemotherapy approved (nitrile) gloves, respiratory protection NIOSH –approved respirator and chemical splash goggles (all of these are provided in the chemo spill kit).
- Actual Procedure
 - Assess for exposure of any individual and isolate the individual from the spill. If the individual's clothing or skin has made contact with the chemotherapy, immediately wash the area with soap and water (see Accidental Exposure Section)
 - Obtain the chemo spill kit and put on the gown, gloves, respirator and goggles.
 - Limit access to the area and post a warning sign if necessary
 - Contain the spill using spill-control pillows found in the kit
 - Wipe up liquids using absorbent gauze pads or spill control pillows.
 - Any glass fragments should be picked up using a small scoop (provided in the kit) and placed in the puncture proof institutional designated chemo hazardous waste container using the designated scoop.
 - Place waste materials in the heavy-duty waste disposal bag (provided in the kit) and seal the bag. Place the sealed bag inside another bag and label the outer bag with hazardous waste label. For the moment leave the outer bag open.
 - Clean spill area thoroughly, beginning with the least contaminated and finishing with the most contaminated area. Use a detergent solution (obtainable from environmental services) followed by water.
 - Use fresh detergent solution to wash any reusable items used to clean up the spill and items located in the spill area (e.g. volumetric pump). Use water to rinse the washed items. Repeat the washing and rinsing.
 - Remove PPE and place in unsealed waste bag.
 - Seal the outer waste bag and place in the **institutional designated chemo hazardous waste container**.
 - It is the RN's or RT's responsibility to clean up chemo spills. Paraprofessionals are there to assist if needed.
 - Hint—The permeability of gloves increase with time (absorbs more substances through gloves) therefore gloves should be changed every 30 minutes or immediately if torn.

Reference

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Original Author: Sharon Lehmann MS, ACNS-BC

Originals Reviewers: Jennifer Bardell, BSN, RN, CRN, Jennifer Bryant BSN, RN, Jessica Kapustin MSN, RN, Lisa T Moore BSN, RN, CRN, Robin Pearce, MSN, RN, Kathy Pittman BSN, RN-BC, CRN, Kimberly L. Venohr BSN, RN, CRN, OCN

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Association for Radiologic & Imaging Nursing
2201 Cooperative Way, Suite 600
Herndon, VA 20171
Tel: 866-486-2762
Fax: 703-884-2229
info@arinursing.org