

Factsheet 4: Giving an anti-cancer syringe by mouth

This factsheet will guide you through how to give a prepared anti-cancer syringe safely by mouth.

For one or more of the following reasons, these anti-cancer medicines have been supplied as a liquid in a syringe:

- Difficulty with swallowing tablets/capsules
- The dose needed cannot be achieved with tablets/capsules in the strengths that are available.

You should only give an anti-cancer medicine this way if you have been taught how to do this safely by a healthcare professional. It is safe for you to handle these medicines if you are taking them as part of your treatment, however they may cause side effects (including skin irritation) if handled by others.

This procedure is not suitable for all medicines. Please only use this procedure for the anti-cancer syringes that pharmacy staff has advised you about.

Remember

- Anti-cancer syringes should not be handled by anyone who is pregnant or planning a pregnancy.
- Use the oral anti-cancer pack provided.
- Store the anti-cancer medicines in the container provided.
- Store the anti-cancer medicines in a secure place, away from and out of the sight of children.

Preparation

You will need a clean and clear working surface.

Try to ensure there are no interruptions (for example from pets or children).

Do not mix different medicines together.

Check how often and over what period of time the treatment has been prescribed. Instructions can be found on the label on the outer bag containing the syringes.

Procedure

1. You will need to have ready the following items:
 - the anti-cancer syringes needed for the dose
 - cup or glass (disposable or kept only for this purpose)
 - tap water (unless otherwise specified)
(Suitable liquid or flavouring: _____)
 - yellow special clinical waste bag
 - kitchen roll (kept only for this purpose)
 - pair of non-sterile disposable gloves
 - plastic apron
 - pair of scissors
 - tray

2. Place a sheet of kitchen towel on the tray.
3. Put on the gloves and apron.
4. Collect the anti-cancer syringe(s) needed for the dose.
5. Cut open one end of the plastic wrapper and place the syringe(s) on the tray.
6. Holding the syringe over the tray, carefully remove the cap from the syringe by twisting it anti-clockwise. Put the cap in the clinical waste bag.
7. Gently pull the plunger in the syringe backwards slightly to release, then **slowly** push the contents of the syringe into the cup. Direct the liquid against the side of the cup to avoid splashes.
8. Place the empty syringe in to the clinical waste bag.
9. Add some suitable liquid to the liquid in the cup.
10. The patient should drink the contents of the cup immediately. Alternatively, the syringe can be given by mouth directly.
11. Repeat for any additional syringe.
12. In case of any spillages, please see Table 1 below for details
13. Clean the work surface with damp kitchen roll and dispose of gloves, kitchen roll and apron into the yellow clinical waste bag provided.
14. All other items should be washed in hot soapy water separate from other household items.
15. Seal and return the waste bag to the hospital when full.
16. Wash hands thoroughly.

Table 1: Handling spillages

| Contact | Action |
|------------------------------|---|
| Skin | Immediately wash the affected area thoroughly with luke warm soapy water. Do not scrub as this may damage the skin. Contact your doctor for advice if you have any adverse effects. |
| Eye | Wash the eye with plenty of fresh water every few minutes for about 20 minutes. Contact your doctor for advice if you have any adverse effects. |
| Work surface or floor | Wearing protective clothing (gloves and apron) wipe up the spillage using paper towels. Wash the area with warm soapy water and dry with absorbent paper towel. Kitchen towel should be put in the special clinical waste bag. |
| Clothing | Wearing gloves, blot the area with kitchen towel, remove clothing and wash separately from other items. Wash any affected areas of your skin as described above. Kitchen towel should be put in the special clinical waste bag. |