

Information about the risk of extravasation (when chemotherapy drugs leak out of your vein)

Cancer Services
Information for patients

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Emergency contact number

Telephone: 0808 178 2212

Please telephone the emergency number above at any time if you are concerned that you have any signs or symptoms of extravasation.

What is extravasation?

Extravasation is a possible complication when receiving chemotherapy. It is rare, but it can cause serious problems if you do not receive the appropriate treatment as soon as possible.

Extravasation happens when one or more of the drugs that we have given you to treat your cancer leaks out of the vein into the surrounding tissue. Your healthcare team take precautions to prevent this happening, but extravasation may still occur.

Very occasionally, the damage to the surrounding tissue may mean that you are referred to the Plastic Surgery Team to repair any damage caused. If this is considered necessary, your oncology (cancer) doctor will explain this to you.

What are the symptoms of extravasation?

The symptoms vary with the different drugs we use.

However, the most common symptom is pain and stiffness to the hand and surrounding area and on occasions, ulceration (breaks) to the skin. You may notice some pain, swelling, stinging or changes at the site of the cannula (needle inserted into the vein). If so, it is very important that you tell the nurse immediately so that appropriate action can be taken.

The nurse may also see signs of swelling or redness. Whilst giving the chemotherapy drug the nurse may realise that there is increased pressure at the cannula site, which may mean extravasation has occurred.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

What should I look out for when I go home?

When your treatment has finished, the nurse will advise that you continue to observe the site where the cannula was sited and if you experience any stinging, pain, redness or swelling, then you must contact the 24-hour helpline immediately.

What is the treatment for extravasation?

This depends on the drug that has been given, but treatment of extravasation should start as soon as it is identified. If it is noticed at the time of administration, the nurse will:

- Use a syringe to draw back as much of the drug as possible from the cannula
- Place a cold or heat pack (depending on the drug) over the affected area
- Apply dimethylsulfoxide (DMSO) solution to the skin and surrounding area (this may help to reduce any damage to the skin)
- Ask a doctor to assess the extravasation
- Apply hydrocortisone cream to reduce the swelling and inflammation

Once the doctor has reviewed the site of the extravasation, we may refer you to the Plastic Surgery Team for a specialist review. It may be necessary to perform a procedure whereby the drug is washed out from the surrounding tissue to reduce the damage caused. If this procedure is required, you will be asked to attend appointments with the Plastic Surgery Team to monitor your progress.

Follow up

The nurse in the chemotherapy suite will make an appointment for you to come back to the hospital 24 hours following the extravasation for us to check the site.

You will be provided with written information about how to look after the site. Your oncology doctor will examine the extravasation site at each of your follow-up appointments.

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਸਿ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਲਿ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

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