



MEDICATION ERRORS IN CHEMOTHERAPY: HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR PATIENTS

RISKS FOR STAFF

Potential risk

- Leakage of chemotherapy drugs during application (e.g. when connecting the infusion to the catheter)
- Contamination of surfaces through leakage, spilling or aerosols from container¹
- Contact with body fluids contaminated with chemotherapy drugs²
- Leakage of chemotherapy drugs through stress cracks occurring in medical devices made of incompatible plastic material³

Counter measure

- Use appropriate personal protective equipment^{1,2}
- Make sure solid surfaces are cleaned correctly¹
- Use appropriate personal protective equipment^{1,2}
- Make sure food and drinks are prepared, stored and consumed separately from sites where chemotherapy is stored, prepared or applied¹

RISKS FOR PATIENTS

Potential risk

- Paravasation (IV catheter moves out of the vein and chemotherapy is applied into the surrounding tissue)
- Overdosing and underdosing⁴
- Increased side-effects (uninformed patients fail to notice and communicate early signs or symptoms)^{5,6,7}
- Application of the wrong drug

Counter measure

- Use checklists and clinical double checks⁸
- Educate to enable them to play an active role in treatment and error prevention patients^{8,6}
- Obtain patient's consent before application⁹, use clinical double checks⁸ and identify patient with two unique patient identifiers¹⁰

Sources:

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- 3 Schlarb A K, Determining resistance to environmental stress cracking in luer fittings. Med Device Technol. 2002 Nov;13(9):30-4.
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