Cytotoxic Precautions During Your Hospital Stay
You have been given a medication called ____________________________.

This drug is cytotoxic. This means it is harmful to the cells in the body. Although your medication will help you, it could cause problems for anyone who does not need it.

This booklet describes what you and your family, friends, and caregivers need to know about cytotoxic precautions.

These precautions are used to keep your family members, friends, and caregivers safe while you are taking a cytotoxic medication.

If you have any questions, please ask. We are here to help you.
What are cytotoxic precautions?
Cytotoxic precautions are used for the safety of those around you. Cytotoxic precautions are the ways that your healthcare team protects themselves from cytotoxic medications or body wastes.

Although the risk of harm may be very low, it is important to be careful. These precautions are only needed when handling your medication or body fluids.

Casual contact like hugging, kissing, and touching are safe.

Family, friends, or caregivers who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or trying to get pregnant can be near you. They should use extra care to avoid contact with your medication or body fluids.

You do not need to be in a room by yourself.
How long do I need to follow cytotoxic precautions?
Your nurse will tell you exactly how long to follow cytotoxic precautions. Generally, you should follow cytotoxic precautions while you are taking cytotoxic medication and for at least 48 hours after you finish the medication.

If you stay in hospital following chemotherapy, the nurses may continue the precautions for 7 days.

How does the medication leave my body?
Your body breaks down the medication. Most of it leaves your body in your urine (pee) and bowel movements. Your body fluids are considered cytotoxic or harmful when there is medication in them. Other body fluids that may have small amounts of the medication include blood, phlegm, sweat, semen, vaginal fluid, vomit, and saliva (spit).
How do I take care of my body wastes?

You must be very careful when you use the toilet. Before you flush the toilet, put the lid down or cover it with a blue pad. Wash your hands well.

If you use a bedpan, urinal, or commode, the nursing staff will use precautions when emptying the waste.

If you do not have control of your bladder or bowels and use disposable diapers or pads to absorb urine or bowel movements, tell your nurse when they are soiled. They should be changed right away and your skin should be washed to avoid irritation.

Care must be taken with other items that may have your body fluids on them, such as dressings, bandages, drainage tubes, and tissues.
What protective equipment will my healthcare team use?

Your healthcare team may use the following equipment when caring for you:

- **Gloves** so that they will not touch medication or wastes with bare hands.
- **Special gowns** that will keep splashes from soaking through to clothes.
- **Masks** in case there is a chance of breathing in cytotoxic medication.
- **Goggles** to stop splashes from getting into the eyes.
- **Special waste containers** – one for sharp equipment and IV tubing and another for pads, tissues, and other waste.

My family likes to help with my care while I am in the hospital. What do they need to know?

The nurse will teach your family or caregiver how to help with your care using cytotoxic precautions. If needed, the nurse will teach your family how to help with your care after you go home.
What about laundry?

If you are wearing your own clothes or using your own linen in hospital, you do not have to wash your clothes separately unless they are soiled with body fluids.

Your caregiver should wear gloves when handling laundry soiled with your body fluids. Wash soiled laundry in a load separate from other family members’ laundry.