

Administration of Oral Systemic Therapy for Cancer

A Quick Reference for Home Care/Primary Care Nurses

Oral systemic therapy for cancer is **HIGH RISK** medication and therefore must be prepared, administered and handled according to specific guidelines.¹

Oral cytotoxic/biologic agents should be labeled as hazardous drugs by pharmacy, highlighting the need for safe handling.

It is recommended that oral systemic therapy for cancer only be administered by nurses knowledgeable about the drug, cytotoxic precautions, management of expected toxicities and other care required by oncology patients.

Registered Nurses should be responsible for the administration of oral systemic therapy in the instances of:

- Administration of first cycles
- Administration of doses if new toxicities are identified and/or doses require modification
- Administration of clinical trial drugs
- Administration of drugs to patients with unstable clinical status or unpredictable outcomes

When a patient, being cared for by Home Care Health Professionals, is prescribed oral systemic therapy for cancer, it is recommended that the primary nurse do the following:

1. Print off and review The [Quick Reference for Nurses](#) and place it on the client's record.
2. Print off and review the appropriate [Medication Information Sheet](#) and place it on the client's record.
3. [Review your Safe Handling Policy/Guideline](#).
4. Print off and review the '[Cytotoxic Precautions at Home: a Guide for Patients and Families](#)', and provide it to the client.
5. Ensure the appropriate [personal protective equipment](#) is available for nurses administering the medication.
6. Ensure the nurses who will administer the medication review the Quick Reference for nurses, the Medication Information Sheet, 'Cytotoxic Precautions at Home' booklet prior to administering the medication.
7. Ensure that home support staff is knowledgeable about cytotoxic precautions practices and that appropriate personal protective equipment is available.
8. Ensure Home Support Staff review the 'Cytotoxic Precautions at Home' booklet prior to their shift.

¹ Cancer Care Nova Scotia (CCNS). (2014). Oral Systemic Therapy for Cancer Standards of Practice. Halifax, Nova Scotia: Province of Nova Scotia

Administration of Oral Systemic Therapy for Cancer

A Quick Reference for Home Care/Primary Care Nurses

Home Care Nurses who administer oral systemic therapy for cancer are encouraged to review the resources in *Cancer Care Nova Scotia's* [Oral Systemic Therapy for Cancer Toolkit for Nurses](#).

For additional information or to arrange an in-service for staff please contact your clinical nurse educator or designated Oncology Practice Consultant:

- In CBHA, PCHA, CHA & GASHA: Michele Rogez, RN, BScN, AE (C), CON(C), (902) 567-8555
- In all other DHAs: Kara Henman, RN, MN, CON(C), (902) 473-1796