

Administering Subcutaneous Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy (SACT) injections (Bortezomib or Cytarabine) – A guide for patients and carers

Other formats

If you need this leaflet in another format such as Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service:

- 01392 402093 (for Mid Devon, East Devon and Exeter services)
- 01271 314090 (for North Devon services)
- rduh.pals@nhs.net

This is a step by step guide for patients and carers to administer subcutaneous Bortezomib or Cytarabine at home. **By carer we are referring to any nominated relative or friend who has been trained to do your injections.**

What happens if you decide to inject Bortezomib or Cytarabine at home?

You and your carer/relative/nominated person will be:

- Given information to read about giving injections and time to ask questions
- Shown how to prepare the things you need to inject yourself and give the injection
- Able to practice getting the injection ready and giving the injection with a nurse supervising

When you are confident in all of the above you will be able to administer the injections at home.

You can have as many teaching sessions as you need supervised by a chemotherapy nurse. If you decide, during or after training, that you do not want to self-inject or if we feel it is not appropriate, then we will arrange for a nurse to give you the injections.

We will do a final assessment when you, your carer and the nurse are sure that you are competent to self-inject at home. You will be asked to sign an assessment of competence form; stating that you feel able to inject safely and that you know how to deal with any problems that may occur.

Remember

- If you have a high or low temperature, or are feeling unwell; do not give yourself the bortezomib/cytarabine injection. You must contact our services by using the provided phone numbers in the contact section below, and speak to a healthcare professional first.
- If you have any new or worsening side effects, especially peripheral neuropathy symptoms, bleeding or bruising, an infection and/or a raised or lowered temperature, do not give yourself the Bortezomib injection. You must contact us for advice first. Peripheral neuropathy refers to changes to your nerves, which may be sensory or motor and most commonly affects your hands and feet. Symptoms might include tingling, numbness, weakness, pain or difficulty with balance or coordination.
- When it is in the sealed wrapper, it is safe for anyone to handle the Bortezomib or Cytarabine. However, once it is out of the wrapper only the people who are trained to handle the Bortezomib or Cytarabine should handle the syringe.
- You must not show, instruct nor allow anyone else to administer your Bortezomib or Cytarabine injections who have not been trained and signed off with competency assessment.
- It is important to stick to your treatment schedule. Ensure that you are administering on the correct day. Please call for advice if you are unsure or think you have missed a dose.
- Some injection preparations need to be stored in the fridge, others at room temperature. We will inform you of which is the case for your injections. It will also be written on the label on the wrapper.
- Anyone who is trying for a baby, is pregnant, or breast feeding, should not handle the Bortezomib/Cytarabine.
- Always make sure that you keep the Bortezomib or Cytarabine out of sight from children and pets.
- Remember to keep the spillage information and kit to hand, in case you need it.
- Always check the syringe carefully to be sure that all the details are correct, including the name of the drug, dose, and that the drug is in date. The drug should appear clear, like water, in the syringe. If it does not look clear then do not inject.
- Inject in the abdomen only and remember to rotate the sites each time you give an injection.

Contact:

Eastern Services (Exeter):

- **Urgent advice line: 07825401059 (24 hours, 7 days a week)**
- Patient advice line (non-urgent): 01392 402876 (Monday- Friday 08:00 – 17:00)
- Trials Team: 01392 402171 or 402871 (Monday-Friday 09:00-17:00)

Northern Services (Barnstaple):

- Seamoor unit: 01271 311579 (Open Monday to Friday -8am to 6pm)
- Acute Oncology Service: 01271 334478 (Open Monday to Friday – 8am to 6pm and Saturday and Sunday – 8am to 12pm)
- Out of Hours: 01271 322577

Equipment

You will need or be given the following equipment:

- A hard plastic case / box to transport and safely store the Bortezomib or Cytarabine syringes
- A cytotoxic sharps box
- A purple cytotoxic waste bag (for gloves and apron if a carer is administering)
- Needles – orange 25g
- Gloves, if a carer is to do the injections
- Apron, if a carer is to do the injections
- Spillage kit and instructions
- Gauze swabs / tissue

The pack containing the syringes will already have the exact dose of Bortezomib or Cytarabine that you need in the syringes. If you have young children in the home, you may need to buy a locking device for the fridge/storage place.

Supplies of Bortezomib/ Cytarabine and equipment

You will be given all your equipment at the beginning of each course to last the 28 days. Therefore, you should not run out of anything. However, if this happens contact the day unit or ward.

You may need to collect your supply of syringes at multiple points throughout the 28 days e.g. once a week. This is because of the limited shelf life of the Bortezomib/ Cytarabine.

How to give a Subcutaneous Bortezomib / Cytarabine injection

Getting the equipment ready

Use the lid from your plastic storage box as an injection tray or a dedicated non-porous tray which you can clean.

- One Bortezomib or Cytarabine syringe packet – you can allow the drug to rise to room temperature for 30 minutes before injecting
- One orange needle
- One cytotoxic sharps box
- One purple cytotoxic waste bag (for gloves and aprons if a carer is administering)
- One tissue/gauze swab (to place on the site after you have given the injection)
- Spillage kit
- One pair of disposable gloves (carer only)
- One apron (carer only)

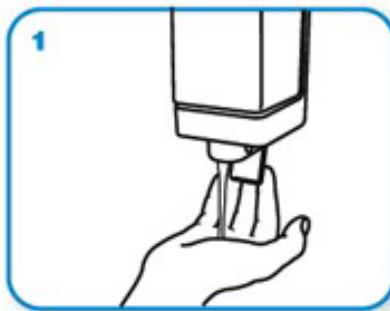
Preparing the work area:

- Wash and dry your hands thoroughly and clean your preparation area (e.g. dedicated container lid or plastic tray). Ideally this will be somewhere without carpet in case of a spill. (*See Figure 1 below*)
- Collect all of the above equipment and place onto your cleaned area.
- To avoid distractions, only people who are helping you should be in the room.
- Before you make yourself comfortable, wash and dry your hands once more and then make sure you have all the equipment to hand ready to give the injection.
- Decide where you will give the injection. To minimize bruising and discomfort, you will need to ensure you change injection sites.
- Open the bag containing the Bortezomib or Cytarabine and tip the syringe onto your container lid/tray.

Figure 1: Hand washing



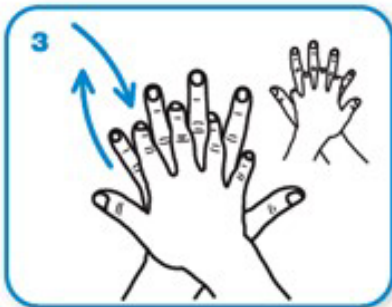
Wet hands with water



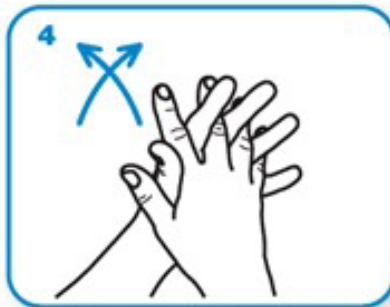
apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces.



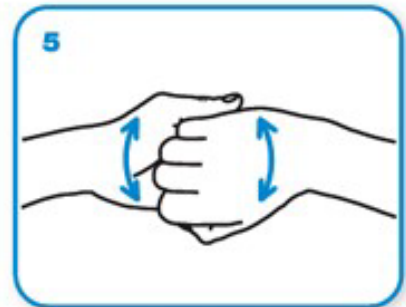
Rub hands palm to palm



right palm over left dorsum with interlaced fingers and vice versa



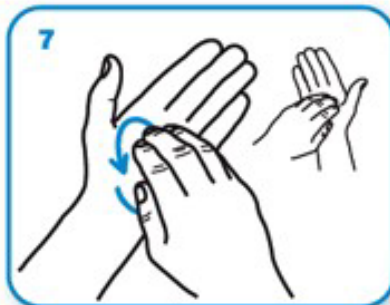
palm to palm with fingers interlaced



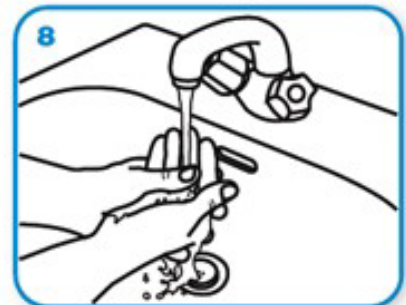
backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked



rotational rubbing of left thumb clasped in right palm and vice versa



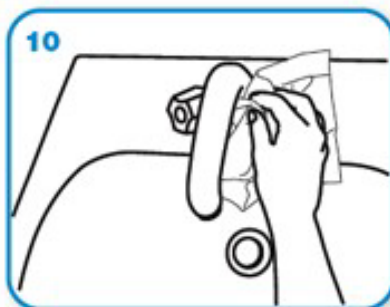
rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa.



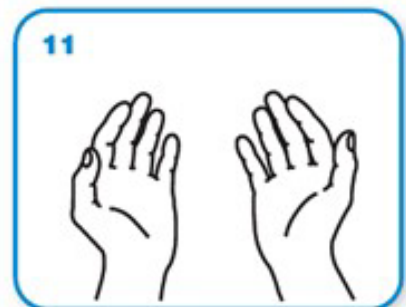
Rinse hands with water



dry thoroughly with a single use towel



use towel to turn off faucet



...and your hands are safe.

Giving the Bortezomib or Cytarabine injection

1. Sit down comfortably in a chair.
2. Check the syringe is in date, has your name on it, and it is the correct dose. If any of the information is incorrect in any way, then you **MUST NOT** give the injection – you should contact the hospital immediately.
3. Check the syringe contents to make sure that it is a clear solution with no particles in it. If this is not the case contact the hospital using the contact numbers above.
4. If everything is correct peel open the needle packet.
5. Remove the screw stopper at the end of the syringe and put this into the sharps bin and then screw the needle onto the syringe.
6. Loosen the needle cover. Do not allow the needle to touch the injection tray or anything else because it will contaminate it. If this happens, discard the needle into the sharps box and use a new needle.
7. Place the ready syringe back onto the tray with the needle cover loosened.
8. Ensure a piece of tissue is to hand. Pick up the syringe and remove the needle cover. Hold the syringe low down the barrel as if you were going to write with a pen.
9. To avoid contamination and the risk of introducing infection, make sure the needle does not come into contact with anything on the way to the skin.
10. With your free hand pinch the skin where you are going to inject and insert the needle at right angles (90 degrees). The needle will deliver the injection just below the skin. (See *Figure 2* below)
11. Once the needle is in place, if you need both hands, release the pinch on the skin. Use one hand to support the syringe and the other hand to push the plunger down slowly until all the drug has gone in.
12. When the syringe is empty, remove the needle from your skin, place it directly into the sharps bin and place the tissue on your skin firmly over the injection site and try not to rub the area.
13. When there is no leaking fluid or blood from the skin, remove the tissue.

Figure 2: Pinching the skin



What to do after the injection

Do not put any of the used items in with your normal household waste. Discard the syringe, tissue, packaging and screw top into the sharps bin. The gloves, and apron (if used) can go into the purple bag. Keep this bag tied when not in use. The bin must be stored out of sight and reach of children and pets, but not locked. Both the purple bag and sharps bin should be returned to the unit or hospital on your next visit for disposal.

After the injection

1. Wash and dry your hands (see *Figure 1 above*)
2. Replace the lid on your Bortezomib / Cytarabine storage box
3. Record the site and date of the injection
4. If there is bleeding or bruising at the site, do not worry. This sometimes happens if the needle has punctured a small blood vessel and will soon stop, and the bruising will fade. Occasionally, Bortezomib or Cytarabine can irritate the skin at the injection site. If this happens, use the contact numbers above.

Dealing with a spillage

- Keep the spillage kit and instructions at hand whenever you inject and make sure that your carer or family member knows how to use it.
- The amount of Bortezomib or Cytarabine you are injecting is small but it is possible to accidentally spill it
- If there is a spillage follow the instructions in the spillage kit.

Accidental needle-stick injury

If you follow all the instructions carefully, the chance of you getting an accidental needle-stick injury is very small. If you or your carer do stick yourselves with the needle it is important to make the puncture site bleed. Then wash the area with lots of running water, dry it, and cover with a plaster. Use the contact numbers above immediately and they will advise what you need to do next.

Your notes

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern, please contact PALS:

- 01392 402093 (for Mid Devon, East Devon and Exeter services)
- 01271 314090 (for North Devon services)
- rduh.pals@nhs.net

Have your say

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You can also share your feedback on the Care Opinion website at www.careopinion.org.uk or freephone 0800 122 3135.



Scan the QR code to visit the Care Opinion website →

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
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