



# Discharge from the Inpatient Hematology/Oncology Service

## *Self-care and numbers to call*

*This handout gives information for you to use at home after you are discharged from the Inpatient Hematology/Oncology Service at University of Washington Medical Center (UWMC).*

Your clinic oncologist is:

\_\_\_\_\_

### For Appointments

If you have questions about a scheduled appointment, or to make an appointment, please call your Team Coordinator:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



*University of Washington  
Medical Center*

### Home Infusions and Line Supplies

If you receive your line supplies from a home infusion agency, please read the information they gave you if you have any questions on home infusions or supplies.

### Risk of Infection

White blood cells (WBCs) help protect your body from infection. But, chemotherapy can decrease your numbers of WBCs called *neutrophils*. This blood condition is called *neutropenia*.

If you have neutropenia, you are at higher risk for getting infections.

To help prevent infections:

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water, especially before eating and after using the bathroom. Or, you can use a hand gel that contains at least 60% alcohol.

- Avoid crowds, people who are sick, and children who have recently received vaccines. Talk with your doctor about how long you should avoid children who were recently vaccinated. This time varies depending on the vaccine.
- Get your flu vaccine and ask your caregivers to get theirs, too. Avoid nasal spray vaccines.
- Avoid contact with people who have received nasal vaccines for at least 2 weeks.
- Clean items you use often with disinfectant wipes. This includes phones and computer keyboards.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, mouth, and central line, especially if your hands are not clean.
- Take good care of your teeth and gums. Use a soft toothbrush. Also, brush and floss your teeth gently.

## Central Line Care

Your central line dressing will be changed on: \_\_\_\_\_

- Clean your central line site and change your dressing as instructed. Dressings for both tunneled and peripherally inserted central catheters (PICCs) must be changed weekly. Talk with your SCCA Clinical Nurse Coordinator if you do not have written instructions on dressing changes and flushing.
- Flush both lumens of your tunneled central line with 10 mL saline and 3 mL heparin once a day and after each use.
- Flush both PICC lumens with 10 mL saline once a week and after each use.
- Shower or bathe every day:
  - Cover the claves of your tunneled central line or PICC line with Parafilm.
  - Cover your line with Aquaguard, Saran Wrap, Press n Seal, or a shower sleeve.
  - If you are using a Curo cap, make sure the Parafilm covers both the Curo cap and the clave connection.

## Fever

A fever is often the first sign of that your body is fighting an infection. While you are on chemotherapy, a fever can be a sign of a serious health problem that needs attention **right away**. You may need to receive life-saving treatment.

Closely monitor your temperature while you are on chemotherapy. To do this, take your temperature:

- 2 times a day, in the morning and at night
- Any time you feel hot or cold, or have shaking or chills.

Call a member of your care team **right away** if you have:

- Fever higher than 100.9°F (38.3°C) by mouth
- Fever higher than 100.2 °F (37.8° C) with an *axillary* (under the arm) thermometer
- Fever higher than 100.4°F (38°C) by mouth for more than 1 hour
- Fever higher than 99.9°F (37.5°C) with an axillary thermometer for more than 1 hour
- Fever more than 1 degree higher than normal if you are taking steroids such as prednisone or methylprednisone
- Shaking chills (even if your temperature is normal)
- Cold symptoms such as a runny nose, watery eyes, sneezing, and coughing

**If you have a fever:**

- You **must** call your care team. If you have a fever at night, **do not wait** until morning to call.
- **Your care team may tell you to go to an Emergency Room (ER).** Follow their instructions. If you have had chemotherapy recently, take your green wallet card with you that says you recently had chemotherapy. Show it to the nurse who greets you at the ER.

## **Other Health Concerns**

For more details about symptoms and home care, please read your Seattle Cancer Care Alliance (SCCA) Patient Care Manual.

## **Urgent Concerns**

If you have any of these symptoms, call a member of your care team **right away**:

- Changes in your central line site, such as redness, swelling, pain, or drainage
- Changes in urine color, pain or burning while urinating, or not being able to urinate for more than 8 hours
- New cough or shortness of breath
- Nausea or vomiting that is not controlled with anti-nausea medicine

- Diarrhea more than 5 times each day
- Problems taking your prescribed medicines
- New or different pain
- New or increased bleeding or bruising
- Headache or dizziness
- Change in your ability to think clearly
- A fall, especially if you hit your head

## Who to Call

This table shows who to call based on the day and time you are calling:

If You Are Calling	Call This Number
Weekdays, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Your SCCA Clinical Nurse Coordinator: Name: _____ Phone: _____
Weekdays, 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. Weekends, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Holidays, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.	4th floor reception at SCCA: <b>206.606.7400</b>
Weekdays, 10 p.m. to 8 a.m. Weekends, 6 p.m. to 8 a.m. Holidays, 5 p.m. to 8 a.m.	UWMC paging operator: <b>206.598.6190</b>  Ask for the Hematology/Oncology Fellow on call to be paged. Give them your phone number and the Oncology Fellow will return your call.

### Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.