

AUGUST 2014

Home and housing chemo precautions

Last month, the *St. Jude Parents* newsletter offered guidelines for protecting yourself from drug hazards while you are in the hospital. The staff knows that most of you take your children back home or to St. Jude housing after chemotherapy (chemo) treatments. So it is also important to know how to protect yourself outside the hospital.

If your child is receiving chemo or other hazardous drugs, you need to be aware that these drugs can be harmful to you and other caregivers. The

medicines can sometimes irritate the skin or cause other serious side effects if they soak into the skin or get in the eyes. Also, your child's body fluids (urine, sweat, vomit and blood) may contain the drugs for up to 48 hours after the final dose.

After you leave the hospital, you need to follow these safety guidelines until the 48-hour precaution period has ended:

- Wear gloves when handling your child's body fluids, soiled linens or diapers.

Get help with Helping Hands

The St. Jude staff knows that you love your children and you want to be there to support and care for them all the time, but sometimes you might need a break. What do you do? You feel bad about leaving your child alone. St. Jude Volunteer Services has the answer.

Through the Helping Hands program, volunteers provide short-term sitter services for patients and siblings. Most Helping Hands requests involve a volunteer sitting with a patient while a parent takes a break from one of the inpatient units or outpatient clinics. Responses from parents, families and staff who have used this service have been very positive.

Program hours

Helping Hands volunteers are here to help families during these hours:

- Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.–9 p.m.
- Saturday and Sunday, noon–8 p.m.

Reasons to use the service

- St. Jude staff need to speak to parents in private.
- Siblings need care while patients are being treated.
- Parents need a break for dinner, laundry or an errand to housing.
- Parents just need a brief "mental health" break.

Limits to the service

- If a volunteer is working with a sibling who is not toilet trained, the parent needs to stay nearby to help with diaper changes when needed.
- Each Helping Hands visit should

be no longer than two hours.

- Each volunteer is allowed to stay with no more than one patient or two siblings.
- The Helping Hands service is offered only in the hospital, not housing.
- This service cannot be used as a babysitting service for parents to take long outings.

How to request

Talk to your Child Life specialist, social worker or nurse to request a Helping Hands volunteer. (All requests should come through a staff member.)

Volunteers will do their best to help you if they are not already assigned to another family.

Volunteer Services and our volunteers hope you will take advantage of this helpful service.

Become a St. Jude Ambassador

September is Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. Now is the time to join St. Jude by becoming a St. Jude Ambassador.

Beginning in August, you can register at stjude.org/September.

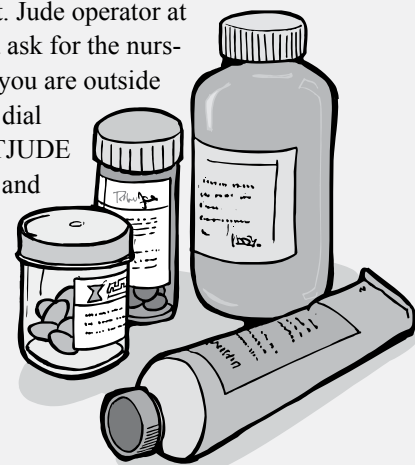
As a St. Jude Ambassador, you'll have access to a group of materials that you can use to spread the word—videos, posters, presentations and more.

Share your story. Join the fight against childhood cancer and help St. Jude increase awareness.

- Dispose of diapers in your regular trash but try to limit your exposure to the diapers.
- Put the toilet lid down when flushing the toilet at home and in St. Jude housing.
- If any of your child's body fluids touch your skin during clean up or diaper changes, wash the skin well with soap and water.
- If any of your child's body fluids get in your eye, flush with water for 15 minutes while holding the eyelid open. Then, call your personal doctor and explain what has happened.
- If your child vomits within 30 minutes of taking chemo at home or in housing, give another dose. The doctor may give you different guidelines for certain oral chemo drugs. Be sure to follow those guidelines. Wear gloves to clean up the vomit containing the chemo drugs. Wash the area completely with warm soapy water and dispose of paper towels in the trash. Wash soiled clothing or towels right away in the laundry with warm water and detergent.
- Women who are pregnant or could become pregnant should avoid contact with chemo drugs and other hazardous drugs.

For more details about giving chemo at home, refer to the handout "Do You Know...Chemotherapy by Mouth at Home." Also be sure to read the Patient Medication sheets for any chemo drugs your child receives. If the drugs are hazardous, these sheets offer safe handling guidelines.

If you have questions or concerns about your safety or the safety of your child during chemo treatments, please talk to a St. Jude doctor or nurse. If you have concerns after clinic hours, call the St. Jude operator at 901-595-3300, and ask for the nursing coordinator. If you are outside the Memphis area, dial toll-free 1-866-2STJUDE (1-866-278-5833), and press 0. When the operator answers, ask for the nursing coordinator.





Talking about Medicines

Medicine charts and calendars

By Shane Cross, PharmD, Pharmaceutical Services

To get the most benefit from medicines, it's important to take them exactly as they are prescribed by your doctor or nurse practitioner. However, many factors can make it hard to follow medicine instructions. Some patients must take complex drug regimens. These can include many different drugs that are given many times each day. All of this can cause parents to forget to give a medicine or to have trouble remembering whether or not a drug was already given.

Having an organized system for taking medicines can make a world of difference. One way to help keep track of a medicine schedule is to use a medication chart or calendar. These are written records that list all of the medicines your child takes and the times that each should be taken. The chart or calendar also can contain some of these details:

- Why each medicine is being used
- What each medicine looks like
- Special instructions for each drug

St. Jude pharmacists can help you design a chart or calendar that fits your child's needs. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you would like to know more about medication charts and calendars.

Walk for St. Jude and raise awareness

Lace up your walking shoes for the kids this November and take part in the *St. Jude Give thanks. Walk.*, a five-mile walk to raise awareness for St. Jude. Patient families are the most important part of the *St. Jude Give thanks. Walk.* And we want you to join in the fun on Saturday, November 22, in one of 65 cities nationwide!

Don't wait to sign up. All participants who register for the 2014 *St. Jude Give thanks. Walk.* by September 1 are automatically entered into the early bird drawing for two AAdvantage® Mileage Award Certificates, totaling 50,000 AAdvantage® Miles, courtesy of American Airlines.

Registration is free, and participants are encouraged to ask friends and family to sponsor them with a donation to St. Jude. Or consider

forming a team with family and friends to increase the fun and the fundraising. Register today at www.givethankswalk.org.

Two events for National Kids Eat Right Month

Clinical Nutrition and Food Services will hold two patient events to celebrate National Kids Eat Right Month. Both events will happen on Wednesdays at 1 p.m. by the ABC Wall.

August 6 – Join the staff for a cooking demonstration and taste testing.

August 20 – Help the staff make homemade pizzas.

St. Jude Parents is published on the first of each month by Patient Education and Biomedical Communications. Your questions and comments are important to us. **We want to print advice and tips from St. Jude parents to other St. Jude parents.**

To share your ideas or to receive this newsletter by email, please call or email Alicia Huettel, RN, MSN, at 901-595-5453 (parents_newsletter@stjude.org) or Lois Young (lois.young@stjude.org). To subscribe to an online version of this newsletter, visit www.stjude.org/parents-newsletter.

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