

# Extravasation: information for patients receiving SACT

## Systemic anti-cancer therapy (SACT) Patient information

Insert patient label here

Date:

Name of drug that has extravasated:

### What is extravasation?

Extravasation happens when a drug leaks outside the vein into the surrounding tissue. Your treatment team is trained to stop this happening, spot it early, and treat it quickly.

This does not happen often, but it is a known side effect of this treatment. It can happen even when nurses take all the right steps.

### Why is extravasation important?

Some cancer treatment drugs can irritate or damage the skin if they leak outside the vein.

### How will I know if something is wrong?

Symptoms can start during your treatment or hours or days later.

If you are on the ward, tell your nurse straight away. If you are at home, call the 24-hour helpline if you notice:

- stinging or burning
- swelling or redness
- leaking or the drip infusion not flowing properly
- the area feels hotter or colder than usual around the cannula, PICC, or portacath device.

## If an extravasation happens

The drip will be stopped. The area will be checked. The right treatment will be given based on the drug you had. The nurses will follow a clear plan to help protect your skin.

They may not always know exactly why the drug leaked into the tissue.

The nurse has given you the recommended treatment for extravasation, which is:

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Extravasation should not affect you having further SACT treatments.

## What do I need to do?

The treatment depends on the type of drug which is thought to have extravasated. Please follow the instructions marked with a tick in the table below for your own individual care.

Raise the arm using a couple of pillows when possible.

Put a **COLD** pack on the area where the cannula was.

Do this 3-4 times a day for 20 minutes, until the swelling and redness have gone. Wrap the cold pack in a cloth first. Do not put it directly on your skin, as this could cause skin damage.

Put a **WARM** pack on the area where the cannula was.

Do this 3-4 times a day for 20 minutes, until the swelling and redness have gone. Wrap the warm pack in a cloth first. Do not put it directly on your skin, as this could cause a burn.

Apply a thin layer of hydrocortisone cream (1%) four times a day if redness present. Continue until redness disappears.

Stop the cream if the area blisters and call the emergency hotline number.

Apply Dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO) 50-99% solution with a cotton bud to the area marked on your skin.

Allow it to air dry. Do not cover the area.

Repeat every 8 hours for 7 days. Apply to area twice the size of extravasation.

If the skin blisters, stop the treatment and contact the hospital.

3 hours after first DMSO application apply hydrocortisone 1% cream.

Repeat every 6 hours for 7 days.

You will need a drip (infusion) of a medicine called Savene for 3 days in a row. The SACT nurse will arrange for you to have this treatment at the hospital as an outpatient on an oncology day unit.

1 - Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

2 - Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

3 - Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

(A cold pack may help with pain. But do not use a cold pack for 15 minutes before your Savene treatment, or for 3 to 4 hours after it).

## Caring for the affected area at home

Follow instructions on compresses, pain relief, skin protection, and monitoring.

- Keep the area clean and dry. Avoid touching it or wearing tight clothing.
- Raise your arm by resting it on two to four pillows when possible.
- Do not expose the area to strong sunlight.
- Only apply medicine or creams that the nurse or doctor treating the extravasation have instructed you to use

## Monitoring the affected area

Look at the affected area at least once a day to check for any changes.

- Has the area changed colour or is there further redness or swelling?
- Is there any thickening or hardening of the skin?
- Is the area blistering, peeling, or flaking?
- Is the area more uncomfortable or painful?
- Is the pain making it difficult to exercise your arm or hand?
- Is there loss of movement without pain?
- Have you developed a temperature above 37.5c

Any concerns, contact our 24-hour cancer care Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC) unit immediately: Hotline number is **0300 019 4302**

Cancer Care Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC) Unit is at Royal Bournemouth Hospital (RBH).

Location: A25, Zone A, Floor 1, West Wing.

## Follow-up care

Your first check-up will be face-to-face. It will be 24 hours after the injury, at the SDEC unit at RBH.

At this visit, the team will decide what care you will need on day 3 and day 7.

We may ask you to send us photos or come back to the hospital if we think you need to be seen again or need more treatment.

The nurse has arranged the following appointments to check how the extravasation is healing:

**Day 1 -** Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

**Day 3 -** Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

**Day 7 -** Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

## Are there any long-term side effects of extravasation?

Most people do not have long-term problems from extravasation. However, some people can have further issues.

It is important to tell us straight away if you notice any symptoms, so we can treat you quickly.

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