

## **Instructions on Handling Chemotherapy**

There are some general precautions that should be taken to minimize the potential for human exposure when handling chemotherapy medications or caring for patients that have received chemotherapy. Most of the precautions are common sense ones – similar to those you'd use when handling any potentially toxic substance or chemical.

- When handling chemotherapy drugs, you should wear protective gloves and wash your hands well after handling. We will provide you with gloves for those drugs that are to be given only once or over several days. For those medications that are to be administered on an ongoing basis, you can purchase exam gloves at your local drugstore.
- Tablets should NEVER be split, crushed, or dissolved as this may disrupt the protective film coating that many drugs have, increasing your exposure risk.
- Capsules should be administered whole and not opened when given.
- Many of the drugs can be given with food or in food. It is important, if it is given in food, to make sure your pet gets the entire dose. If you are giving the medication at a meal, we recommend you give it in a small amount of food and once this is eaten, then give the remainder of the meal.
- Drugs should not be handled by children, women who are pregnant, planning to become pregnant or who are nursing, or anyone who is immunosuppressed.
- Keep the drugs in the prescription vial or original packaging, outside of the reach of children and pets.
- Any remaining drug that is not to be used should be disposed of properly. Contact your oncologist for advice on proper disposal.
- Chemotherapy can be eliminated in the urine and feces following treatment, particularly for the first 72 hours. In order to avoid any possible exposure, we recommend you wear gloves and wash your hands well after cleaning up pet elimination. This includes when cleaning a litter box. You should also take care that your pet does not eliminate in the areas where children may play during this time.
- If the bedding becomes soiled during the first 72 hours, you should wear gloves while handling the bedding and wash it separately in hot water.
- If your pet has received oral chemotherapy within the past twelve (12) hours and vomits we also recommend that you wear gloves while cleaning up after your pet, and wash your hands well to decrease any possible risk of exposure.