

Factsheet 2: Opening oral anti-cancer capsules

This factsheet will guide you or a carer through how to open anti-cancer capsules safely so the contents may be taken in a small amount of food or drink.

You should only open anti-cancer capsules if you have been advised how to do this safely by a healthcare professional.

This procedure is not suitable for all medicines. Please only use this procedure for the anti-cancer capsules that healthcare professionals have advised you about.

Remember

- Your anti-cancer capsules should not be handled by anyone who is pregnant or planning a pregnancy unless you are taking on the advice of your medical team.
- Use the oral anti-cancer pack provided.
- Store the capsules in the container provided.
- Store the capsules in a secure place, away from and out of the sight of children.

Preparation

You will need a clean and clear working surface.

Try to ensure there are no interruptions (for example from pets or children).

Do not mix different medicines together.

Procedure

The label instructions for some anti-cancer capsules states that they should be taken on an empty stomach. Taking a small amount of food with the capsule being taken as described in the following procedure is acceptable.

1. You will need the following items:
 - the anti-cancer capsule(s) needed for the dose
 - two medicine pots
 - two spoons (to be kept only for this purpose)
 - liquid or soft food
(Suitable liquid or soft food: _____)
 - yellow clinical waste bag
 - kitchen roll (to be kept only for this purpose)
 - pair of non-sterile gloves
 - mask
 - plastic apron
2. Place a sheet of kitchen towel on the working surface.
3. Put on the gloves, mask and apron.

4. Put the capsule(s) needed for the dose in one medicine pot.
5. Hold a capsule firmly at each end.
6. With the second medicine pot underneath carefully twist and pull the capsule open. Empty the contents into the medicine pot. Place the empty capsule in the yellow clinical waste bag.
7. Repeat steps 5 and 6 for each capsule needed for the dose.
8. Add some liquid or soft food to the capsule contents in the medicine pot and mix. See page 1. Do not put the spoon that has been in contact with the medicine back into the food container, if applicable.
9. Take the medicine/give the medicine to the patient. Make sure that the whole dose is taken. You may need to rinse the medicine pot with water or juice and take/give to the patient.
10. In case of any spillages, please see Table 1 below for details.
11. Place all disposable items (e.g. medicine pots) used into the yellow clinical waste bag provided.
12. Clean the work surface with damp kitchen roll and dispose of kitchen roll, mask, gloves and apron into the yellow clinical waste bag provided. The medicine pots and spoons can be washed in warm soapy water, rinsed and dried before being re-used.
13. Seal and return the waste bag to the hospital when full.
14. Wash hands thoroughly.

Table 1 Information on handling spillages

Contact:	Action
Skin	Immediately wash the affected area thoroughly with luke warm soapy water. Do not scrub, as this may damage the skin. Contact your doctor for advice if you have any adverse effects.
Eye	Wash the eye(s) with plenty of fresh water every few minutes for about 20 minutes. Contact your doctor for advice if you have any adverse effects.
Work surfaces and floors	Wearing protective clothing (gloves, apron, mask) wipe up the spillage using paper towels. Wash the area with warm soapy water and dry with absorbent paper towel. Kitchen towels used should be put in the yellow clinical waste bag.
Clothing	Wearing gloves, blot the area with kitchen towel, remove clothing and wash separately from other items. Wash any affected areas of your skin as described above. Kitchen towel should be put in the special clinical waste bag