

# the alex

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Caring for your child  
at home when they  
have febrile neutropenia



## Why have I been given this information?

You have been given this information because your child has febrile neutropenia and may be able to have treatment at home. This information will help you to know what to expect and what you must do while your child is having treatment at home.

**Following the advice in this information can help to make sure:**

- that your child recovers from febrile neutropenia as quickly as possible
- that your child's treatment at home is as safe as possible.

## What is febrile neutropenia?

Febrile neutropenia is a condition in which your child has a fever with a temperature of higher than 38C and their blood is low in neutrophils. Neutrophils are a type of white blood cell important for fighting infections.

## Why is my child able to have their antibiotic treatment for febrile neutropenia at home?

The oncology team have checked your child's febrile neutropenia and found that this time it is 'low-risk'.

For more serious episodes of febrile neutropenia children must stay in hospital for antibiotic treatment. They have IV (intravenous) antibiotic treatment. This is given via 'central venous access' (your child's Portacath or Hickman line).

As your child's febrile neutropenia is low-risk, after they have had some doses of IV antibiotics in hospital they can finish their antibiotic treatment at home. At home, they can have their antibiotics by mouth or through a tube in their nose (NG tube).

# What conditions must be in place so that it is safe for my child to have their treatment at home?

**We can only transfer your child home for treatment if:**

- your home is within 1 hour's drive of the Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital
- you have transport available straight away (either car or ambulance) so that your child can return to the Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital if needed
- you have a working home phone or mobile phone
- you understand and agree to the instructions given to you by the oncology team. Do ask if you are unsure of anything.

## What happens when my child is having treatment at home?

- a member of the hospital team will phone you daily until your child is well and no longer needs to take antibiotics. You may be asked to stop giving the antibiotics even though you have some left.
- you must take your child's temperature every 4 hours when they are awake. The hospital team will tell you when you can stop doing this.
- you will give your child their antibiotic medicine by mouth or via their NG tube.

### **Be aware**

you must follow the instructions that the hospital team will give you for giving your child their antibiotic medicine.

## **Is it usual for my child to carry on having a high temperature for a while after they have started their antibiotic treatment.**

Yes. It might take 3 to 4 days for your child's temperature to come down. We will ask you about your child's temperature when we phone you. You do not need to worry just because your child gets hot.

## **When to call the hospital**

We expect your child to carry on having temperatures for a while; it might take three or four days for it to settle completely. We will ask about it when we call you, but do not want you to worry just because your child gets hot.

## **What signs or symptoms that my child may have mean that I should phone the hospital team straight away?**

Do phone the hospital team straight away (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) if you are worried about your child or they have any of the symptoms listed below.

**Phone: 01273 696955**

- during normal working hours (9am to 5pm) ask for **Ext. 62433**
- outside of normal working hours ask for **Ext. 62416.**

### **Phone straight away if your child:**

- does not feel well or look right to you
- has chills or shaking
- keeps being sick (vomiting) or gets new diarrhoea (watery poos)
- has signs of infection such as redness (this may look different in black or brown skin), tenderness or pain anywhere on the body
- is tired, pale or short of breath
- appears dehydrated. They may have a dry mouth and not pee (urinate) as much
- has a low temperature (less than 36C)
- has a new high temperature of higher than 38C after 24 hours without a high temperature
- has pain that is severe or lasting a long time
- refuses to drink.

### **Be aware**

you know your child best. If you are concerned or worried, or if something does not feel quite right, speak to the team treating your child.

**In an emergency, call 999**





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