

# Oncology

Remember these 5 points when handling patients with cancer:



**Loperamide can be used to treat a patient's chemotherapy-induced diarrhea only if abdominal pain, bloody stool, or fever is not present.**

If the patient is exhibiting signs of infectious diarrhea (abdominal pain, bloody stool, fever), the patient should be referred to the hospital emergency department.



**Non-specific NSAIDs (e.g. ibuprofen, naproxen, diclofenac) should not be recommended to patients undergoing chemotherapy.**

When acetaminophen (the first line OTC pain reliever for chemotherapy patients) is combined with NSAIDs, it may increase the risk of bleeding. If an NSAID must be used, a COX-2 specific NSAID (e.g. celecoxib) is safer.



**Studies have shown that dietary phytoestrogens do not increase the risk of breast cancer recurrence and progression.<sup>1</sup>**

Although phytoestrogens (found in soy and soy-products) are similar in structure to the natural estrogen in the body, phytoestrogens can be safely recommended to women with breast cancer.



**Patients who are taking procarbazine or lomustine should not consume alcohol.**

Proper fluid intake should be encouraged since dehydration can potentially increase the risk of things like nephrotoxicity with some forms of chemotherapy.



**A barrier method (e.g. condom) is recommended during sexual intercourse for a week following chemotherapy for female patients.**

Women receiving chemotherapy may secrete chemo in the vaginal fluid, so a barrier method is recommended for a week after using chemotherapy regardless of childbearing age.

<sup>1</sup>Nechuta SJ et al. Soy food intake after diagnosis of breast cancer and survival: an in-depth analysis of combined evidence from cohort studies of US and Chinese women. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2012;96(1):123-132.

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