Children and Young People Care Pathway guidelines for Intrathecal Chemotherapy

Administration of Intrathecal chemotherapy in children and young people can only be performed in St James/Lanesborough theatres or PICU

1. It is the responsibility of the Specialist Registrar (SpR), in Paediatric Oncology to prescribe the Intrathecal Chemotherapy, on an Intrathecal chemotherapy prescription sheet, this is area specific, either a theatre or PICU IT prescription sheet should be used and to liaise with pharmacy requesting the Intrathecal drugs.

2. It is the responsibility of the Specialist Registrar in Paediatric Oncology to notify the theatre manager that there will be a procedure involving Intrathecal chemotherapy in their theatre and to obtain their signature on the Intrathecal prescription. If the procedure is to be undertaken in PICU then the Matron, Carol Kennelly, can authorise the administration and sign the prescription.

3. It is the responsibility of the Specialist registrar in Paediatric Oncology to liaise with theatres and book the child onto a theatre list or in the case of PICU, a time frame for the procedure to take place.

4. It is the responsibility of the doctor to identify a nurse that can second check and is on the Trust Intrathecal register. The doctor should also plan ahead and inform the nurse in a timely fashion.

5. When the child is called to theatre or PICU, the Specialist Registrar in Paediatric Oncology will collect the Intrathecal chemotherapy from the pharmacy production department, 1st floor, Lanesborough wing, who will also supply at least 2 Intrathecal Lumbar puncture needles of appropriate size. The ‘Surety’ spinal needles and syringes supplied can only be used for Intrathecal chemotherapy as per National Patient Safety guidelines. Pharmacy production is responsible for the ordering and supplying. Any unused needles must be returned to pharmacy production.

6. Only nursing staff that have been trained appropriately and deemed competent, whose name appears on the Trust Intrathecal register can second check the Intrathecal chemotherapy with the designated doctor.

7. The second checker nurse should check that the doctor performing the Intrathecal chemotherapy administration appears on the Trust’s Intrathecal register prior to the procedure.
8. The appropriately trained doctor and nurse should check the identification and consent of the patient with the carer/parent prior to anaesthesia.

9. The parent/carer or child should verify the drug that will be administered under anaesthetic.

10. An appropriate door sign stating that Intrathecal chemotherapy is taking place must be placed on the door of the room where the procedure is happening. There should be no interruptions during the procedure.

11. It is the second checker nurses responsibility to second check the Intrathecal chemotherapy with the appropriately trained doctor and to observe and ensure the safe delivery of the Intrathecal chemotherapy. It may be necessary for the nurse to assist in the lumbar puncture process only. The nurse should not be expected to assist in any other procedure that the child is having concurrently for example bone marrow aspirates.

12. It is the responsibility of the nurse to ensure that the cytotoxic spillage kit is available and at hand.

13. All documentation should be completed by both the nurse and doctor following the procedure.

14. It is the responsibility of both the nurse and doctor to ensure the safe disposal of any waste in accordance with the trust policy, ensuring the chemotherapy syringe and Intrathecal needle is disposed of in a purple lidded sharps bin which after use should be sealed, dated and signed and disposed off in theatres as per trust policy. It is at present necessary for the nurse to take one from the ward if the process is being undertaken in theatre.

15. The Intrathecal prescription, including all signatures, should be photocopied and the original filed in the patient notes and the copy placed in the Intrathecal prescription folder in the Doctor’s office on Pinckney ward.

16. In the event that intravenous chemotherapy is to be given on the same day as the Intrathecal chemotherapy, pharmacy must see the signed Intrathecal prescription indicating that the Intrathecal drugs have been given before the intravenous chemotherapy will be released.

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