

Subcutaneous injection	An injection where a needle enters your body just under the skin. (Not the same as intravenous , where the needle goes into a vein.)
Surgical oncologist	A doctor who has special training to operate on people with cancer.
Surgery	An operation.
Transfusion	When blood or blood products go into your body through an intravenous (IV) system (see intravenous injection).
Treatment protocol	A set of instructions that gives all the details about how you will get cancer treatments.
Tumour	A lump or group of cells. A tumour can be either benign (without cancer) or malignant (with cancer).
White blood cells	The body's defense system. White blood cells fight infection by catching and killing germs (bacteria) that get into your blood. Neutrophils are the most common type of white blood cell.
X-rays	A type of radiation used to find out about (or diagnose) medical problems. When X-rays are used at high levels, they can treat some kinds of cancer. This is called radiation therapy.

Looking for more information on this topic?

You can contact the Canadian Cancer Society at www.cancer.ca or call the Cancer Information Service of the Cancer Society at 1-888-939-3333. You can also contact your local public library for books, videos, magazine articles and online health information. For a list of public libraries in Nova Scotia go to <http://publiclibraries.ns.ca>.

Cancer Care Nova Scotia has made an electronic patient education program, the Oncology Interactive Education Series (OIES), available in most health districts in Nova Scotia. Please check with your health care team, your Cancer Patient Navigator, or your health care library to see if this program is available in your district and to learn how to use the program.

For more information visit *Cancer Care Nova Scotia's* website www.cancercare.ns.ca



Capital Health

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Cancer and Cancer Treatment: Understanding Medical Words



Allogeneic transplant	A transplant that uses bone marrow or stem cells that are donated by someone else.
Alopecia	When hair on your body or head falls out because you had chemotherapy or radiation therapy. Your hair will most likely grow back.
Anemia	A medical term that means you do not have enough red blood cells or hemoglobin (which is part of red blood cells). Hemoglobin carries oxygen from your lungs to your tissues and cells. Your body needs oxygen to produce energy.
Anti-emetics	Medicine that you might take to reduce or prevent nausea (feeling like you will throw up) and vomiting (throwing up).
Autologous transplant	A transplant that uses your own bone marrow or stem cells.
Benign	Non-cancerous or non-malignant (no cancer).
Biopsy	A short operation to remove a small piece of tissue, which is then sent to a lab to see if it contains cancer cells.
Bone marrow	The soft part at the centre of your major bones. It creates red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets.
Bone marrow transplant	See Stem Cell Transplant.
CBC	Complete Blood Count. A set of tests that counts red blood cells (including hemoglobin), white blood cells and platelets.
Cancer	A general term for more than 100 diseases. Cancer is when abnormal cells grow out of control in your body's organs or tissues.
Carcinoma	The most common type of cancer. It may start in the bowel, breasts, cervix, lungs, kidneys, ovaries, prostate gland, or in the skin.
Chemotherapy	The cancer treatment that uses medicines to kill cancer cells or stop them from growing.
Combination therapy	When more than one cancer treatment is used to treat your cancer. For example, you may have surgery and radiation therapy, or surgery and chemotherapy.
Constipation	Not being able to have a bowel movement.

Diagnosis	When your doctor finds out what your health problem is. Doctors will diagnose a disease by listening to what signs and symptoms you have, doing a physical check-up and sometimes, doing tests to provide more details.
Diarrhea	Diarrhea means that you have more than three bowel movements per day and that what comes out is watery (not solid).
Dietitian	A person who is trained to give you advice about food and nutrition.
Fatigue	Feeling very tired or weak. It is a common side effect of cancer and cancer treatments.
Gynecological oncologist	A doctor who has special training in treating women with tumours of the ovary, womb, or cervix.
Health care team	A group of health care professionals that treat and support people with cancer. The team includes your doctor, nurse, dietitian, pharmacist, radiation therapist, social worker, and others.
Hematologist	A doctor who has special training in treating blood diseases, such as leukemia.
Hemoglobin	The protein found in red blood cells, which carries oxygen from your lungs to the rest of your body.
Hormone therapy	A cancer treatment that uses hormones (given as medicines) to treat some kinds of cancer.
Hormones	Proteins produced by your body, which move around in your blood. Hormones control how you grow, how you burn up the food you eat, and how you reproduce.
Immunotherapy	A cancer treatment that uses your body's immune system to fight cancer cells.
Injection	Also called a needle or shot. An injection is when a needle is used to put fluids into your body.
Intravenous (IV)	An injection that allows fluids to go right into a vein. The IV system includes: a needle that goes into your hand, arm, or chest, connected to a thin tube, which is connected to a bag that contains a liquid.
Leukemia	Cancer of the white blood cells.
Lymphoma	Cancer of the lymph system. This is the system in your body that is made up of the spleen, lymph nodes, and lymph vessels. The lymph system carries food, oxygen, and water to the cells in your tissues.
Malignant	Cancerous – with cancer.
Medical oncologist	A doctor who diagnoses and treats people with cancer, mainly using chemotherapy (medicines), or hormone therapy.

Metastasis	The spread of cancer from one part of the body to another through the bloodstream or lymph system.
Nausea	Feeling like you might throw up. Having an upset stomach that makes you feel like you will throw up.
Neutropenia	A medical term that means you do not have enough white blood cells, and that you might have trouble fighting off infection.
Nutritionist	A person who is trained to give you advice about food and nutrition.
Oncologist	A doctor who has special training in treating cancer.
Oncology nurse	A nurse who is educated to support you and your family and help you understand about your cancer and treatment. The nurse may give you your treatments, and can help you cope with any side effects or other problems.
Pathologist	A doctor who looks at cells and tissues under a microscope to see whether or not they are normal.
Platelets	Cells that help you form blood clots, to stop bleeding.
Prognosis	The likely outcome of a disease. Your prognosis provides answers to questions like: Will I be able to live a normal life? Will I be cured? Will I die?
Radiation oncologist	A doctor who has special training in treating people with cancer using radiation therapy.
Radiation therapist	A health care professional who is trained to give radiation therapy, and to support you during your radiation treatments.
Radiation therapy	The use of radiation from high-energy x-ray machines to treat cancer. Radiation therapy can either be given through external beam radiation, or through internal radiation, called brachytherapy.
Red blood cells	Blood cells that contain hemoglobin, which carries oxygen from your lungs to the rest of your body. Red blood cells also carry carbon dioxide (a waste product) from your body back to your lungs so you can breathe it out.
Remission	When the signs and symptoms of cancer disappear, and no more active cancer cells can be found.
Sarcoma	A type of cancer that starts in the muscles, bones and cartilage.
Stem cells	These are the parent cells for all the blood cells in your body, including white blood cells, red blood cells and platelets.
Stem cell transplant	A type of cancer treatment, sometimes called a bone marrow transplant. It is when you get new stem cells transplanted into your body, giving you a new, healthy immune system.