Cancer Care: A Guide for Patients, Families and Caregivers
Capital Health Cancer Care Program
at the QEII Health Sciences Centre

This booklet is meant to support the information that your health care team gives you. It does not replace any information that your health care team gives you. This booklet was developed by the Nova Scotia Cancer Patient Education Committee, the Cape Breton Cancer Centre, Cancer Care Nova Scotia and the Capital Health Cancer Care Program.

WX85-0730 Revised March 2011.
The information in this booklet is to be updated every three years.
# Table of Contents

## Introduction

### SECTION 1: Your Care at the Capital Health Cancer Care Program

- How to find Us ..................................................................... 1
- Where is my appointment? ................................................... 2
- Getting to Treatment............................................................ 2
- What will happen at my first appointment? .......................... 3
- Who will I see on my first visit? ............................................. 3
- Other team members ........................................................... 4
- What should I bring to my first appointment?....................... 5
- Questions you may want to ask ............................................ 6
- Screening for Distress ........................................................... 6
- Patient Rights and Responsibilities......................................... 7
- What happens after my first visit? ......................................... 7
- What treatment will I have to pay for? .................................. 8
- Medications .......................................................................... 8
- Financial Concerns................................................................ 8
- Accommodations for Patients and Families ......................... 8
- Support groups .................................................................. 10
- Other Services at the QEII ................................................... 10
- Satellite Oncology Clinics.................................................... 11
  - Aberdeen Hospital............................................................ 11
  - Valley Regional Hospital .................................................. 12
  - Yarmouth Regional Hospital .............................................. 12
SECTION 2: Living with Cancer

Finding out that you have cancer ................................. 13
What is cancer? ............................................................ 13
Who gets cancer? ......................................................... 14
How do we know if you have cancer? ......................... 14
Kinds of cancer ............................................................ 15
What is a Clinical Trial? .............................................. 15
Cancer treatments ........................................................ 15
Other treatment therapies .......................................... 16
Side effects ................................................................. 16
Talking about your cancer .......................................... 16
Talking with your children ......................................... 17
What happens after my cancer treatments have finished? ... 17
Information & Support Services ................................. 18
Information in languages other than English ............... 18
Recommended websites ........................................... 19
Important phone numbers ....................................... 19
Understanding Medical Word .................................... 20
Cancer Care Nova Scotia ........................................... 24
Introduction

As people who work in the cancer care system, the staff of the Capital Health Cancer program at the Queen Elizabeth (QEII) Health Sciences Centre is all too familiar with the challenges that cancer presents. However, rapid advances in cancer care are truly improving the outlook for people with cancer. Cancer health professionals with different strengths and backgrounds are working together every day to get better results. This team approach promises that you and your family will receive the best care and support from everyone on staff.

There’s an old saying that goes: A single finger cannot lift a pebble. This is a reminder that as individuals we all need help at one time or another, and that together we can accomplish much, much more.

The Cancer Care program at the QEII has an exceptional team of dedicated professionals who want to work with you to meet the challenges of your cancer. They will help you understand your diagnosis and your treatment choices.

This booklet is a general guide to help you understand the Cancer Centre and your cancer treatment. Remember that every cancer patient is different. Your doctors and the other members of your healthcare team will give you the details about your cancer and your treatments. This booklet is not meant to replace any information your healthcare team gives you.

This booklet was written with the help of people who have had cancer. Patients have told us they would have been better prepared to cope with their cancer and its treatment if they had had a better understanding of the disease and its treatments ahead of time.

We welcome your comments on how we can improve this booklet.

Drew Bethune, MD, MSc, FRCSC
Interim Clinical Head

Vickie Sullivan, RN, BN, MHS, CON(C)
Director, Capital Health Cancer Care Program
Halifax Infirmary Site

1. Halifax Infirmary
2. Abbie J. Lane Memorial Building
3. Camp Hill Veterans’ Memorial Building

Rehab Site

4. Nova Scotia Rehabilitation Centre

VG Site

5. Bethune Building
6. Mackenzie Building Laboratories
7. Centre for Clinical Research
8. Dickson Building
9. Victoria Building
10. Centennial Building

Patient Parking

Denotes Entrance

Please do not wear scented products when you come to Capital Health.
SECTION 1: Your Care at the Capital Health Cancer Care Program

How to find us

The Cancer Care program at Capital Health is located in the Victoria General (VG) site of the Queen Elizabeth II (QEII) Health Sciences Centre in Halifax.

It may help avoid confusion, if you remember that the QEII includes a number of former stand-alone hospitals and other buildings. All these facilities are located at two different sites, the VG and Halifax Infirmary sites, just a few blocks apart, in the centre of Halifax.

There are two main entrances to the Victoria General Hospital:

- University Avenue

This is the closest entrance to the Dickson Centre, where many of the outpatient cancer clinics are located. This is the first stop for many cancer patients

- South Park Street

This is the entrance to the parking lot and the closest to the Centennial Building, which is part of the VG site.

You have two choices for parking:

- Pay parking lots at the VG site – hourly and per day rates.
- Meters on the streets surrounding the VG site.

Both inpatients and outpatients of the NS Cancer Centre and Hematology programs can get parking vouchers. To be eligible for a voucher, you must have treatments at the hospital for at least 14 days in a row (exclusive of weekends). Parking vouchers provide 50% off the daily parking rate. You can get a parking voucher application form from your unit or clinic reception desk. If you do not have treatments at the hospital for at least 14 days in a row and are having trouble with the cost of parking, ask for a referral to the social worker.

VG Site Parking

Please see key on opposite page for building names.
Where is my appointment?

The Cancer Care program at the QEII is in several locations at the VG site.

Your first appointment with a cancer specialist may take place in an outpatient clinic. There are several different clinics located at the VG site: the Nova Scotia Cancer Centre, the Hematology Clinic, Medical Day Unit, Surgery Clinic, and ENT Clinic. Care is also provided on in-patient units at the VG and the Halifax Infirmary sites. The person who makes your appointment will let you know where your appointment will take place and give you directions.

Satellite oncology clinics have been set up at other hospitals so patients can have their cancer care closer to home. These clinics are located at the Valley Regional Hospital in Kentville, the Yarmouth Regional Hospital in Yarmouth and the Aberdeen Hospital in New Glasgow. For further information about the services provided at these clinics, refer to the pages for each clinic located at the back of section one. (see pages 11-12)

When you are contacted about your appointment, you will be told if you will be seen at one of the satellite oncology clinics or at the QEII Health Sciences Centre in Halifax.

If you are getting one of the following treatments, you will need to go to the QEII Health Sciences Centre in Halifax for some, or all of your care:

- Patients who need radiation therapy.
- Patients who need combination therapies (both chemotherapy and radiation).

Some patients, regardless of where they live, may still require referral to Halifax based on their diagnosis. They may have some or all of their care delivered at this centre. Examples include patients who have head and neck, brain and gynecological cancers.

In addition to the services offered at the QEII Health Sciences Centre in Halifax, and the satellite oncology clinics, chemotherapy is available at most hospitals. Every effort will be made to arrange for you to have your chemotherapy as close to your home as possible.

Getting to Treatment

Some people have difficulty getting to the QEII or their local satellite clinic. In Nova Scotia, we do not have a province-wide driving service for cancer patients. If you have difficulty getting to your treatments, ask the QEII Social Worker, 902-473-6067, or your Patient Navigator, 1-866-524-1234, for help.

The Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness Boarding, Transportation and Ostomy (BTO) Program provides help for cancer patients with travel to treatment, call 1-800-563-8880. To take part in this program, you must:

- Be a resident of Nova Scotia with a valid health card
- Have a family income of less than $15,720 per year

Some communities offer shuttle services and/or volunteer driver services. Ask the QEII Social Worker, 902-473-6067, or your Patient Navigator, 1-866-524-1234, about services in your area.

“I didn’t know you could claim all your trips on income tax.”
Cancer Survivor
What will happen at my first appointment?

If you are not being admitted to hospital, your first visit is a consultation or discussion visit only. It is unlikely that you will receive any treatment on your first visit. Additional blood tests, X-rays or procedures may be needed to decide the best treatment for your cancer.

Plan to be here for several hours; even if you are not being admitted to stay overnight. Although everyone does their best to keep people from waiting too long, sometimes you may have to wait for the nurse or doctor to come and talk with you.

If you have waited more than half an hour past your appointment time, please check with the receptionist.

Try not to cancel your first visit! It is an important one. It can be difficult to schedule another time. If you must cancel an appointment, please call the Cancer Centre, 902-473-5140.

Given the large number of patients we see, it is very difficult for us to schedule patients’ appointments at a preferred time; we appreciate your understanding.

Who will I see on my first visit?

Your healthcare team includes many different kinds of people, including doctors, nurses, dietitians, radiation therapists, pharmacists, social workers and students. Here are some of the people you might meet on your first visit:

• When you arrive for your appointment, a receptionist will greet you. The receptionist will ask you basic questions, such as your date of birth, address, and a person to contact in the event of an emergency. They will also ask for your health card. This is to make sure the information about you on file is correct. On later visits, the receptionist will check with you to make sure that all this information is current.

• The next person you see usually will be a cancer (oncology) nurse. The nurse will meet with you in an examining room before you see the doctor. The nurse will ask you important questions about you and your family. He/she will help you understand the information you are given. The nurse will also help you if you have concerns or questions.

• Next, the doctor will meet with you. When you are diagnosed with cancer, you are referred to a cancer doctor, called an oncologist. There are actually a number of different types of oncologists. All oncologists work closely together, and you may see more than one kind of cancer specialist. He/she will spend time with you, explaining your cancer and deciding what treatment would be best for you. The doctor will usually examine you.

• The QEII is a teaching hospital with a long tradition of excellent medical training. During your visit you may meet medical residents and students. Residents are doctors who have received their medical degree and are now training to become specialists. Students are under the direct supervision of a cancer team member. If you are not comfortable having students involved in your care, please speak with your doctor or nurse.

“The oncologist answered all my questions... he had all kinds of time for me...”

Cancer Survivor

We encourage you to ask any questions you may have about your cancer and its treatment, and to be an active member of your healthcare team.
Other team members

If you would like to see other members of the hospital’s healthcare team, the doctor or nurse can arrange this for you. These other professionals include social workers, dietitians, occupational therapists, spiritual care workers, pharmacists and physiotherapists.

Cancer Patient Navigators

Your cancer patient navigator’s role is to act as your guide through the healthcare system. They can answer many questions or tell you where to get answers to your questions. They can give you information that helps explain the different aspects of cancer and its treatment. They can also connect you with resources in your community.

Navigators also work with members of your healthcare team to coordinate your visits for cancer treatment. It is very difficult for the Cancer Centre to schedule patients’ appointments at a preferred time, we appreciate your understanding.

After your treatment is completed, your navigator will assist you with any problems you may have after you return to your home.

“I spoke to the Patient Navigator and she told me what to expect from the time I went into the operating room, to the time of chemotherapy. That was a positive experience, because there wasn’t any surprises. That’s what got us through it.”

Cancer survivor

Health interpreters (translators)

We make every effort to ensure that the needs and expectations of cultures are addressed. If English is not your first language, your healthcare team can provide a cultural/language interpreter (translator) for you. Do not be afraid to ask for this service. It is very important that you understand what your healthcare team says to you about your treatment, and that you understand any instructions they may give you. There is no charge for this service. Your healthcare team has a list of available cultural/language interpreters. Sign language interpreters are also available, upon request.

Psychosocial Oncology Team

It is common for a cancer diagnosis to create distress of varying degrees for patients and their family members. Your oncologist and nurse are there to help you with this.

The psychosocial oncology team also provides help for the psychological, emotional, spiritual, social, family, and symptom management issues that often create distress for patients and their families.

Your psychosocial oncology team works with your nurse and cancer doctor. The team includes social workers, spiritual care providers, advanced practice nurses, psychologists and psychiatrists. Advanced practice nurses (APNs) are nurses who have a master’s or doctoral degree and have specialized in psychosocial cancer care. APNs may provide care for emotional, social and family concerns, or for such things as managing symptoms like fatigue or sexual health problems.

Palliative Care Team

These professionals work with patients and families to support and provide care related to pain and symptom management and end-of-life care. The team is usually made up of doctors, nurses, pharmacists, social workers, dietitians, physiotherapists and occupational therapists. People often think that palliative care is only for cancer patients who are dying.
"Tapping into your spirituality is about becoming more authentically connected to yourself, to God... to whatever gives you the deepest meaning in life. In that respect, everyone is spiritual.”

Rev. David Maginley, Chaplain, QEII Cancer Care Program

This is not so. Palliative care professionals are skilled, knowledgeable people who focus on aspects of cancer treatment other than the cure. In other words, they treat the symptoms of cancer (like pain) and the side effects of cancer treatment. Their role is to provide you with the best possible care to ensure that you can enjoy the fullest possible range of activities during and after your cancer treatment.

Social Workers
Social Workers at the Cancer Centre help patients and their families adjust to the changes in their lives caused by cancer and its treatment. Social Workers provide counseling on issues such as the effects of an illness on family relationships, financial difficulties, childcare and other issues.

Spiritual Care
Chaplains provide emotional and spiritual support to patients and families of any ethnic or religious background, as well as those who do not identify with a religious practice.

If you feel that you could benefit from Spiritual Care, ask your doctor or nurse about seeing a chaplain. You can also contact the QEII Spiritual Care department directly:
Weekdays from 8:00am – 4:00pm.
Call 902-773-4055.
For after-hours emergencies, a chaplain can be reached through your nurse.

Volunteers
The QEII is fortunate to be supported by many volunteers who provide a variety of help and support to patients in the in-patient and outpatient areas of the hospital.

What should I bring to my first appointment?

Bring your medications in their original container (prescription medications, over the counter medications, vitamins, and supplements) to show your cancer doctor. Bring enough medication to last your stay in Halifax.

• Bring a list of things you are allergic to, including medications and foods.

• If you are being admitted to hospital, your medication will be supplied to you, including any medications you take that are not for cancer.

• Bring your health card. If you have private health insurance, please bring that card too.

• Bring things to help you pass the time, such as books, crosswords, magazines, audiotapes or knitting. Do not bring anything that is too expensive or means a lot to you. Unfortunately, things can be lost or stolen.

• The QEII is a smoke free/scent free environment. Scented and perfumed products can cause allergic reactions for some people and can add to some patients’ feeling of nausea. Please do not wear scented products like perfume, aftershave, hair spray and lotions.

It can be very stressful and confusing to take in a lot of new information about your cancer treatment. You may find it helpful to have a family member or friend come with you when you are discussing your treatments with your healthcare team. They can take notes for you or just listen to the discussions with the team. They can help you remember things you have been told or hear something you might have missed.
Questions you may want to ask

Write down a list of questions you have and bring the list with you. This will help you remember what you want to ask. Do not be nervous about asking questions. Bring a pen and some paper to jot down the answers.

Here are some questions that cancer patients often ask:

- What type of cancer do I have?
- What stage is my cancer?
- Has the cancer spread to other parts of my body?
- What tests will I need?
- When will I get the results?
- What are my treatment options?
- What happens without treatment?
- Where can I get my cancer treatment?
- Will I need to stay in the hospital overnight to have my treatment?
- When will my treatments start?
- When and how will I know if the treatments work?
- What side effects am I most likely to have?
- What can I do to manage the side effects?
- What support is there for me?
- Is there any kind of support available for my family and friends?
- Will I be able to take care of myself or will I need help?

Screening for Distress

Cancer can be a difficult and stressful illness. Many people experience distress during their cancer experience. This is because cancer affects more than just your body — it can affect many parts of your life such as your emotions, your work, your finances, and your relationships with family and friends. Distress can be described in many ways. Some people describe distress as a general feeling of discomfort or upset.

To better understand how you are feeling and coping with your cancer, your health care team may ask you to complete a short Screening for Distress Questionnaire. It will only take a few minutes for you to complete.

Once you fill out the questionnaire, someone from your health care team will review it with you. You and your health care provider will then work together to decide on what might help you to deal with the concerns you identified.

Screening is a quick way for your health care team to understand the issues that concern you the most. Screening can help you to play a more active role in your care. By letting us know what is bothering you, we can provide you with information about services and resources that are available to help.

“I am always impressed with how respectfully and how earnestly the health care professionals listen to patients and their families.”

Cancer Survivor
Patient Rights and Responsibilities

You are an important part of the health care team. If you have questions or want to talk more about your rights and responsibilities, please speak with a member of your health care team or a patient representative (1-855-799-0990) who can help you address concerns related to your health care experience.

You have the right to:

• Expect your personal privacy to be honoured and that all communications and records pertaining to your care be kept confidential.
• Review your records.
• Know by name the doctors, nurses, therapists and other staff members responsible for your care.
• Understand your diagnosis, the treatment prescribed for you, the likely outcome of your illness, and any instructions required for follow-up care.
• You have the right to meet with another doctor to get a second opinion.
• Know the reason why you are given various tests and treatments.
• Know the general nature and any risk of a procedure or treatment prescribed for you.
• Change your mind about any procedure for which you have given your consent.
• Refuse to sign a consent form if you feel everything has not been explained to your satisfaction, or cross out any part of the consent form that you do not want applied to your care.
• Refuse treatment and to be informed of the medical consequences of this action.

Your responsibilities are to:

• Ask questions until you clearly understand your diagnosis, treatment and/or method of care.
• Know and follow hospital policies, such as: no smoking within the facility and the QEII is a scent-free environment.
• Respect the privacy of other patients.

What happens after my first visit?

• Your cancer doctor and nurse will give you information to take home with you. You can read it and share it with others.
• You will also be given a phone number that you can call if you have any more questions after you go home.
• You may be given an appointment to come back for more discussion or for treatment. It might be possible for you to have your treatment at your local hospital. If so, your cancer doctor and nurse will work with your local hospital team to keep track of your treatment.
• Your cancer doctor will send a letter to your family doctor. Within two weeks of your first visit or your release from hospital, please make an appointment with your family doctor to discuss your understanding of the treatment plan.
• Try to get all of your questions answered during your first visit. You may find it helpful to keep a journal or notebook to write down the answers to your questions. You may also want to keep track of all your tests, procedures or treatments.
What treatment will I have to pay for?

You will not pay for the cancer care provided at the QEII and the satellite oncology clinics. It is covered by the province’s health insurance.

Medications

Cancer medications are provided free of charge to patients while they are in the hospital.

If you are prescribed medication to take at home, you will have to pay for it yourself.

If you have any concerns about the cost of medications, contact the Medication Resource Specialist at the QEII, 902-473-8241 or your Patient Navigator, 1-866-524-1234.

Financial concerns

For some people, a cancer diagnosis can have a big impact on their financial situation. If you have financial concerns, please discuss them with your nurse or doctor, and they will try to find help. The social worker at the Cancer Centre can connect you to the government services and community organizations that can provide financial help.

It is a good idea to keep all your travel, food and accommodation receipts. You may be able to claim them on your income tax return. You can get more information from the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency and/or the person who prepares your tax return.

Accommodations For Patients and Families

If you need to travel to the city and stay overnight in Halifax, there are two lodges available for patients and families: Point Pleasant Lodge and The Lodge That Gives.

Point Pleasant Lodge is associated with the QEII.
1121 South Park Street
Tel: 902-421-1599
www.pointpleasantlodge.com

Point Pleasant Lodge is located one block from the QEII Hospital. It is within walking distance and a free shuttle bus service is also available to and from the hospital. Patients receiving treatment at the QEII Hospital can stay at Point Pleasant Lodge for free during their treatment. The reservation must be made by a booking clerk at the QEII Hospital. Additional charges apply for each guest, unless a person is confirmed to be an “essential escort” by the booking clerk at the time of the reservation. You must contact Point Pleasant Lodge before 10:00am on the day of your arrival to confirm your reservation. There is limited parking at Point Pleasant Lodge. The cost of parking is $7.00/day plus tax. Parking is available on a first come, first served basis. Most of the rooms are double rooms. Patients who are staying at the lodge on their own may be asked to share a double room with someone of the same gender. There is a charge for meals. Meal vouchers for cancer patients and essential escorts are available through the Nova Scotia Cancer Centre.

Patients from New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island are given a daily meal allowance whatever the length of stay.

“It wasn’t something we were prepared for financially, we just didn’t know.”
Cancer Survivor
“A lot of people do not know that there is financial assistance available. A lot of people do not know that if you are under a certain income, there is financial assistance available for medications and transportation and maybe for child care . . .”

Cancer survivor

The Lodge That Gives
Canadian Cancer Society
5826 South Street
Tel: 902-420-1849 or 1-800-639-0222 ext 223
www.cancer.ca

The Canadian Cancer Society’s Lodge That Gives offers accommodations to cancer patients and their families living more than 50 kilometers away from the cancer treatment centre in Halifax. Nova Scotia cancer patients stay free of charge and meals are provided at no cost. There is no charge for a parent or a guardian staying with a child, an escort required by a transplant patient or a patient who requires support for their “tube feeding”. Family members and/or support persons can stay for $55 per night. This fee covers the cost of the room and three meals per day; however, fees may be waived in special circumstances, at the discretion of the Lodge Coordinator.

First time reservations for the Lodge That Gives can be made through a booking clerk at the QEII Cancer Treatment Centre, a family physician, or by a cancer specialist. If you have stayed at the Lodge in the last year, you can make reservations by phone or on-line, www.cancer.ca. You will be asked to show your medical appointment card upon arrival. You may arrive the night before your appointment and are welcome to stay one night after your appointment if needed.

Hotels/Bed and Breakfasts
These hotels, inns, and bed and breakfasts offer discounts or special rates for QEII patients. When you book, tell the clerk that you are a patient at the hospital or a family member. They will let you know if they need any paperwork to give you a special rate.

- Atlantica Hotel Halifax .......... 902-423-1161
  1980 Robie St.
  www.atlanticahotelhalifax.com
- Chebucto Inn ...................... 902-453-4330
  6151 Lady Hammond Rd.
  www.chebuctoinn.com
- Commons Inn ..................... 1-800-565-2020
  5780-88 West St.
  www.commonsinn.com
- Halifax Haven Guest Home ...... 902-423-1161
  5897 Inglis St.
  The Halifax Haven Guest Home is a not-for-profit place to stay operated by the Mennonite Church. For patients who can afford it, there is a suggested donation of $35 per night. Transportation may be available for patients.
  - Home Away From Home .......... 902-477-6286
    Medina Court (Armdale)
    www.welcomeinhalifax.com
  - Lord Nelson Hotel .............. 1-800-565-2020
    1515 South Park St.
    www.lordnelsonhotel.com
  - The Garden Inn .................. 902-492-8577
    Bed & Breakfast
    1265 South Park St.
    www.gardeninn.com
  - Waverly Inn ...................... 902-423-9346
    1266 Barrington St.
    www.waverleyinn.com
  - Westin Nova Scotia Hotel ....... 902-496-8585
    1181 Hollis St.
    www.thewestinnovascotian.com

For more information about accommodations, phone Tourism Nova Scotia at 1-800-565-0000 or visit www.novascotia.com.
Support groups

There are many different cancer support groups. Some are for the patients. Others are for the family and/or friends of the patient. Others are open to anyone. Groups may be led by a health care professional or made up completely of peers. You can find support groups that meet face-to-face or online.

There are several ways to find a support group in your area:

- Halifax: 902-473-6067 (Nova Scotia Cancer Centre); for Hematology, contact David Maginley at 902-473-3449, or Janice Spencer at 902-473-4072.
- Sydney: 902-567-8551 (Social Worker at the Cape Breton Cancer Centre)
- All other areas: 1-866-524-1234 (Cancer Patient Navigators).
- Contact the Canadian Cancer Society at 1-800-639-0222 or visit www.cancer.ca.
- If you are interested in online groups, contact “Cancer Support and Care Online (CANSCO)”, www.canada.thewellnesscommunity.org

Health care professionals from various cancer centres in Canada lead these groups. Most are available to residents of any province or territory.

Other Services at the QEII

Banking Machine
Banking machines are located in several areas of the VG Site. Ask the receptionist to direct you to one.

Bus Service
Contact Metro Transit at 902-490-4000 for routes and times.

Food Services
Cafeteria
Main Floor, Centennial Building, VG Site.

Tim Hortons
Main floor Dickson Centre, and main floor Centennial Building, Victoria General Site.

Parking
There is an hourly rate for parking in the QEII lots. Speak to the social worker at the QEII if you have concerns about paying for parking.

Prayer and worship
There is a chapel located on the main floor of the VG building.

Within a short walking distance of the VG, you can find places of worship of most major denominations. For a complete listing, look under the word “Churches” in the Yellow Pages of the Halifax Regional Municipality phone book.

Resource Library
All cancer care areas will have information available for you and your family. A resource library, supported by volunteers, is available to cancer patients. It is located in the Cancer Centre on the main floor of the Dickson Building.

Sunshine Room
Room 11-017 – 11th floor, Victoria General Building, VG Site

This is a comfortable, supportive area where people undergoing cancer treatments can be introduced to massage therapy, therapeutic touch and reflexology. Head wraps are available. These services are provided free of charge by trained volunteers. Feel free to drop in.

Taxi Service
There are direct lines at the entrance to the VG Site.

Telephones
Pay phones are located at the main entrances of the VG Site.
Satellite Oncology Clinics

Satellite oncology clinics have been set up at other hospitals so patients can have their first visit, follow-up visits and treatments nearer to their homes.

The decision about where a patient receives care is based on individual patient needs, and is based on things such as the kind and extent of cancer a patient has and the suggested treatment.

When you are contacted about your appointment, you will be told if you will be seen at one of the satellite oncology clinics or at the QEII Health Sciences Centre in Halifax.

Aberdeen Hospital
835 East River Road
New Glasgow, NS  B2H 3S6

Directions To The Clinic
You must first register at the central registry which is located on the ground floor. The oncology unit is located on the West Wing of the Fourth Floor.

Contact Information
Telephone Number: 902-752-7600, extension 4922

Clinic Information
Clinics are held monthly. Appointments are required. They are made by referral from a Physician.

Other Information
• Cafeteria:
  A cafeteria is located on the ground floor of the hospital.
  Hours of operation for the cafeteria are: 7:30am – 12:00 Noon.
  Vending machines are located in the cafeteria.

• Parking lot is located beside the hospital. Parking is a flat rate of $2.00. If a patient is unable to pay for parking, a token will be given by the oncology clinic staff.

• Pay phones are located at the main entrance on the ground floor.

• A banking machine is located at the main entrance on the ground floor.
Valley Regional Hospital
150 Exhibition Street
Kentville, NS   B4N 5E3

Directions To The Clinic
Enter through the main doors at the Valley Regional Hospital.
By Stairs: Go up the main stairs and turn right. The registration desk will be on your left.
By Elevator: After coming in the main entrance, turn right and go down the hallway to the first set of elevators. After leaving the elevator, turn left.

Contact Information
Telephone Number: 902-679-2835

Clinic Information
Clinics are held daily, excluding holidays. Appointments are required.

Other Information
• Cafeteria
  A cafeteria is located in the hospital. Hours of operation for the cafeteria are: 7:30am – 6:15pm.
• Parking lot is located at front of hospital. Parking is $2.00 a day.
• Pay phones are located at the main entrance.
• A banking machine is located in the hospital.
• A change machine is located in the main lobby of the hospital.
• For further information about services offered at the Valley Regional Hospital, ask your healthcare team for the Patient Information Manual or visit www.avdha.nshealth.ca.

Yarmouth Regional Hospital
60 Vancouver Street
Yarmouth, NS   B5A 2P5

Directions To The Clinic
Patients register in the South West Health Cancer Centre, located on the 4th floor of building C at Yarmouth Regional Hospital.

Contact Information
Telephone Number: 902-742-3542, ext: 1381
Website: www.swndha.nshealth.ca

Clinic Information
Medical Oncology Clinic is held one day every 2 weeks. Radiation Oncology Clinic is held one day every month. Appointments are required. They are made by referral from a Physician.

Other Information
• Cafeteria: A cafeteria is located in the basement of the hospital. Hours of operation for the cafeteria are: 7:30am – 6:00pm Monday–Friday. Weekend and Holiday hours are: 9:30am – 1:00pm and 4:00pm – 6:00pm
• Parking is a flat rate of $2.00. The parking lot is located off Vancouver St. Limited free parking, is available, by entering the Grove Road entrance.
• Pay phones are located in the main lobby of the hospital, on the first floor of building C near the elevators and on the 4th Floor near the Cancer Centre waiting area.
• Pay phones are located in the main lobby of the hospital, on the first floor of building C near the elevators and on the 4th Floor near the Cancer Centre waiting area.
• A banking machine is located in the main lobby of the hospital. A change machine is located in the main lobby of the hospital.
• The Cancer Patient and Family Resource Room offers resources such as literature, DVDs, wigs, head wraps, breast prostheses, mastectomy bras, etc. It is located in the South West Health Cancer Centre and is open daily from 8:00am – 4:00pm.
• The Harmony Room is also located in the Cancer Centre and offers free complementary therapies including therapeutic touch, reflexology, reiki and light massage.
SECTION 2: Living with Cancer

Finding out that you have cancer

When you first learn that you have cancer, your feelings may overwhelm you. Common reactions are sadness, fear, anger, denial and feeling helpless. These feelings are normal. Almost all people will have them. They are not a sign of weakness. You should not feel guilty about having these feelings.

Your healthcare team wants to help you and your family cope with your feelings about cancer. Information that can help you gain more control over the way you deal with your cancer is available.

It is important to remember that everyone is different. Some people feel they will cope better with their cancer if they have a greater understanding of the disease and its treatment. Others only want to receive a little information.

You may find it helpful to review some of the information found on page 15 to learn more about cancer and your treatments. You may also find it helpful to contact the resources noted on page 19 of this booklet.

What is cancer?

Cancer is not a single disease. There are more than 200 different kinds of cancers. The different kinds of cancer are usually named according to the part of the body where they first develop, for example, breast cancer and prostate cancer.

Cancer occurs when certain cells in your body become abnormal and then reproduce themselves (multiply). These abnormal cells sometimes form a mass (or lump) that is called a tumour. But not all tumours are cancer. There are two kinds of tumours: benign and malignant.

• **Benign tumours** do not spread to other parts of the body. They are not cancer.

• **Malignant tumours** are cancer. They can spread to other parts of the body.

Cancer spreads in different ways:

• Sometimes cancer tumours grow (spread) directly from where they start growing to nearby organs and tissues.

• Cancer also can spread when cancer cells break away from a tumour and travel to other parts of the body. These cells grow and create new tumours. The cancer cells travel through either the blood stream or the lymphatic system to reach other parts of the body. The lymphatic system is a series of vessels that carry lymph to different parts of the body. Lymph is a watery fluid that contains cells that fight infection and disease.

• In some kinds of cancer, such as leukemia (blood cancer), these cancer cells start to grow in many places at the same time.

When cancer cells spread to other parts of the body, it is called metastasis. Whenever and wherever cancer cells grow and spread in a person’s body, they can prevent healthy cells and organs from doing their job. As a result, the body cannot work like it should and the person gets sick.

You may find it helpful to review some of the resources found on page 19 of this booklet to learn more about your type of cancer.
How do we know if you have cancer?

To find out if you have cancer, your doctors will do a number of tests. One of these tests may be a biopsy. A biopsy is when a doctor takes out a very small piece of a tumour or tissue from where a tumour may have spread. They look at the piece under a microscope and do tests on it. A biopsy will tell you and your doctor if you have cancer and what kind of cancer you have. Knowing the kind of cancer helps your healthcare team plan the best treatment for you.

For most kinds of cancer, your doctor will also do other tests to find out the stage of your cancer. The stage of your cancer means how far it has spread, or how ‘advanced’ it is.

Staging involves doing exams and tests to learn more about your cancer. These tests will show the size of a tumour, and if your cancer has spread to nearby lymph nodes or to other parts of your body. Staging gives your healthcare team the information they need to discuss treatment options with you.

The tests you might have will depend on the medical guidelines for your specific kind of cancer. Some of the tests are listed below.

- CAT scan, MRI, PET scan
- Biopsy
- Chest X-ray
- Mammogram
- Bone scan
- Ultrasound
- Blood tests
- Exploratory surgery

Who gets cancer?

Anyone can get cancer. However, this does not mean that anyone in particular will get cancer. Most people will not get cancer.

Cancer has many different causes. For example, cancer can be caused by exposure to tobacco smoke or other poisons, the ultraviolet rays in sunlight, or the food we eat.

While things like smoking may cause some cancers, the exact cause of most cancers is unknown. Cancer also strikes people who look after themselves and are otherwise very healthy. A person’s ethnic origin (their race) can be a factor in getting some types of cancer. Cancer is also said to “run” in some families. This is not because you “catch” cancer from a family member. It is because parents can pass on to their children a genetic weakness that makes them more likely to get certain types of cancer. You cannot catch cancer from someone who has cancer. It is not contagious.

Cancer is still a common disease, and there is no magic cure. In fact, as doctors and scientists have succeeded in treating and preventing other diseases, helping people to live longer, cancer has become more common. This is because the older a person is, the more likely they are to get cancer. As people live longer and longer, cancer will strike more people. One out of every three people can expect to have some kind of cancer during their lifetime.
**Kinds of cancer**

There are four main kinds of cancer:

1. **Carcinomas** are the most common kind of cancer. They start in a gland or solid organ, such as a lung, breast, prostate, bowel or ovary.

2. **Sarcomas** are cancers that start in the muscles, bones and tissues that connect different parts of the body.

3. **Leukemias**, or blood cancers, are cancers of the white blood cells.

4. **Lymphomas** are cancers of the lymphatic system. The lymphatic system is a series of vessels that carry lymph to different parts of the body. Lymph is a watery fluid that contains cells that fight infection and disease.

**What is a Clinical Trial?**

Clinical trials test new cancer treatments. Clinical trials are set up carefully and the results are carefully measured. You may want to ask your healthcare team if you can participate in clinical trials. Or your healthcare care team may ask you to join a clinical trial. Be sure to ask any questions you have before deciding whether to take part. It is OK to say no if you do not want to be part of a clinical trial. Your healthcare team will still offer you the best cancer treatment available. For more information about clinical trials, visit the Cancer Care Nova Scotia website [www.cancercare.ns.ca](http://www.cancercare.ns.ca).

**Cancer treatments**

The kind of treatment you need depends on the kind of cancer you have and how advanced it is.

The goal of your treatment may be to:

- shrink the cancer tumour;
- remove the tumour altogether;
- kill cancer cells that may have already spread;
- reduce the chance that the cancer will come back; or
- help you deal with the symptoms caused by certain cancers.

There are several types of cancer treatments. These include:

- Surgery
- Chemotherapy
- Radiation therapy
- Hormone therapy
- Biotherapy (immunotherapy and biological therapy)
- Combination treatment (for example, chemotherapy and radiation therapy)
- Bone marrow/stem cell transplant

Understanding these treatments can help you talk about your choices with your healthcare team. To learn more about cancer treatments, call the Canadian Cancer Society’s Cancer Information Service 1-888-939-3333 or visit their website [www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca).

“My husband came in once and watched what they did. The Radiation Therapist explained how the machine worked. I think that was good for him, because now I wasn’t going into some unknown room and getting some unknown treatment. He could picture what was happening.”

Cancer Survivor
**Talking about your cancer**

Telling people you have cancer and explaining your treatment can be very difficult. You may wish to tell family, close friends and your employer. You may not want to tell others. Everyone’s comfort level is different.

Here are some suggestions to help you talk about your cancer:

- **Make the first move** - people may be unsure or afraid to ask you questions.
- **Speak at the level they understand**, especially when talking with children.
- **Let them experience it their way** - their reaction may not be the same as yours.
- **Let them know what to expect during your treatment**.
- **Tell them how they can help** - people want to help but often don’t know how.
- **Be prepared for difficult questions**.
- **Have them speak to your Healthcare Team about their questions and concerns**.

You and your family may find it helpful to read the booklet “Living with Cancer: A guide for people with cancer and their caregivers” available from the Canadian Cancer Society, call 1-888-939-3333 or visit [www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca).

---

**Other treatment therapies**

Before, during, and after cancer treatment there are other therapies that can assist you with relaxation and pain management. Many cancer patients have benefitted from Massage Therapy, Acupuncture, Aromatherapy, Tai Chi and other approaches. Before trying any other therapy, talk to your Healthcare Team about the benefits and risks. Together you can make the best decision for you.

You may find it helpful to read the booklet “Complementary Therapies” available from the Canadian Cancer Society, call 1-888-939-3333 or visit [www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca).

**Side effects**

Cancer treatments sometimes do things to people besides treat cancer, these are called side effects. Some examples of side effects are upset stomach, hair loss and tiredness. Some people do not have any side effects from their treatments. Other people have some or many side effects.

The good news is that today there are many ways to manage both cancer symptoms and treatment side effects. Be sure and let your health care team know what side effects, if any, you are having. They may be able to suggest something that is helpful. It is also important to remember that many treatment side effects go away as soon as treatment ends.

During your treatment, you will receive the support you need to resume your normal life routine as soon as possible. In some cases, specialized doctors and nurses from the Palliative Care Team will offer help with symptom control, support and counseling.
Talking with your children

Many parents don’t quite know where to begin to talk with their children about their cancer or a loved one’s cancer. Often, parents are unsure about how much to share, how to explain things in a way that makes sense for children, or when to share information. Your healthcare team can connect you with resource people who can help you talk with your children about your cancer and your treatments.

You and your family may also find it helpful to access these resources:

- When a Parent is Sick: Helping Parents Explain Serious Illness to Children, Joan Hamilton, Clinical Nurse Specialist, Cancer Care, QEII. Available from the Cancer Program at the QEII or Chapters.
- Talking to Kids About Cancer www.cancercouncil.com.au
- When a Parent has Cancer www.cancercouncil.com.au

What happens after my cancer treatments have finished?

After your cancer treatments have finished, you will receive follow-up care to make sure you are recovering and that your cancer has not returned. Where you get your follow-up care will depend on the kind of care that you need and the type of cancer you have. You may get your follow-up care in your community, or you may have to go to a cancer centre (Halifax or Sydney).

Follow-up care is often provided by your family doctor. Your family doctor will be told about your treatment and any further tests or care that you should receive. Through your family doctor, your healthcare team at the Cancer Centre will stay in touch with you and monitor your progress.

Ask your healthcare team about the Cancer Transitions program available in your area. This program is for patients who have finished treatment and are getting back to daily life.

You and your family may find it helpful to read the booklet “Life After Cancer” available from the Canadian Cancer Society, call 1-888-939-3333 or visit www.cancer.ca.
Information & Support Services

In addition to the services provided by the Cape Breton Cancer Centre, information and support services are available in your community. Ask your healthcare team to direct you to services that may be helpful.

“*They try to make sure you understand, but you need something to refer back to sometimes, when you are sitting at home.*”

Family member

Canadian Cancer Society (CCS)
The CCS offers information resources and support programs. Call 1-888-939-3333 or visit www.cancer.ca.

Pink Rose Program is a system of information and guided support developed to aid the patient diagnosed with breast cancer. Available from the Nova Scotia Breast Screening Program, website: www.breastscreening.ns.ca.

Public Library
The public library in your community is a valuable source of cancer information. Many libraries offer free Internet access. Please speak to the librarian at your local branch.

Reef Knot Kit is available for all Nova Scotia men newly diagnosed with prostate cancer through their Urologist. The kit contains a welcome letter, “Prostate Cancer: A Booklet for Patients” and contact information for support groups in Nova Scotia.

Resources available on the Internet
Today, you can find an endless amount of information on the Internet. It is helpful to remember that not all information you will find is correct. The best advice is to treat everything you find on the Internet with caution unless you know it is from a reliable website. Look for sites that are Health on the Internet (HON) certified, they will display this HON icon. www.hon.ch

Information in languages other than English
There are a number of reputable sources of cancer information in languages other than English.

We recommend the following Canadian resources:
• Canadian Cancer Society www.cancer.ca or call 1-888-939-3333
• Cancer Care Manitoba www.cancercare.mb.ca
• Vancouver Coastal Health www.vch.eduhealth.ca

You may also be interested in accessing resources outside of Canada. Please note that there may be differences between Canadian information and the information you read on a website outside of Canada. Talk to your healthcare team about how this information applies to you. The BC Cancer Agency and the Canadian Cancer Society both have lists of websites in languages other than English:
• BC Cancer Agency www.bccancer.bc.ca
• Canadian Cancer Society www.cancer.ca

“I’m very much an information seeker.”
Cancer Survivor
**Recommended websites:**

- Cancer Care Nova Scotia  
  [www.cancercare.ns.ca](http://www.cancercare.ns.ca)
- BC Cancer Agency  
  [www.bccancer.ca](http://www.bccancer.ca)
- Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada  
  [www.braintumour.ca](http://www.braintumour.ca)
- Canadian Association of Psychosocial Oncology  
  [www.capo.ca](http://www.capo.ca)
- Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation  
  [www.cbcf.org](http://www.cbcf.org)
- Canadian Cancer Society  
  [www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca)
- CancerCare  
  [www.cancercare.org](http://www.cancercare.org)
- Canadian Virtual Hospice  
  [www.virtualhospice.ca](http://www.virtualhospice.ca)
- Cancer View Canada  
  [www.cancerview.ca](http://www.cancerview.ca)
- Colorectal Cancer Association of Canada  
  [www.colorectal-cancer.ca](http://www.colorectal-cancer.ca)
- Kidney Cancer Canada  
  [www.kidneycancercanada.org](http://www.kidneycancercanada.org)
- Leukemia & Lymphoma Society of Canada  
- Ovarian Cancer Canada  
  [www.ovariancanada.org](http://www.ovariancanada.org)
- Prostate Cancer Canada  
  [www.prostatecancer.ca](http://www.prostatecancer.ca)
- Smoking Cessation: Addictions Services, Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness  
  [www.gov.ns.ca](http://www.gov.ns.ca)
- Smoking Cessation: Canadian Cancer Society Smokers Helpline 1-877-513-5333,  
  [www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca)
- Thyroid Cancer Canada  
  [www.thyroidcancercanada.org](http://www.thyroidcancercanada.org)
- Lung Cancer Canada  
  [www.lungcancercanada.ca](http://www.lungcancercanada.ca)
- Myeloma Canada  
  [www.myelomacanada.ca](http://www.myelomacanada.ca)
- Young Adult Cancer Canada  
  [www.youngadultcancer.ca](http://www.youngadultcancer.ca)

**Important phone numbers**

Make sure you have these phone numbers:

- Emergency: 911  
- Healthlink, non-emergency health information: 811  
- Family Doctor

Call QEII Locating (switchboard) and ask for the oncologist on call 902-473-2220.

- Cancer doctor after hours and on weekends.

- Treatment unit/clinic:

- Cancer Care Program – QEII, Referral Office, 902-473-5140  
- Nova Scotia Cancer Centre, 902-473-6000  
- Hematology Clinic, QEII, 902-473-6605  
- Cape Breton Cancer Centre, 902-567-7771  
- Cancer Care Nova Scotia, 1-866-599-2267  
- Canadian Cancer Society Information Service, 1-888-939-3333  
- Cancer Patient Navigators, 1-866-524-1234  
- Drug Assistance for Cancer Patients, 1-877-330-0323  
- Nova Scotia Family Pharmacare Program, 1-877-330-0323  
- Nova ScotiaSeniors Pharmacare Program, 1-800-544-6191  
- Others:
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 200 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 drugs 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.

Cure
When all signs of the cancer are gone and there is no chance that it will come back.

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 healthcare professional trained and registered 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 form your lungs to the rest of your body.

**Hormone therapy**
A cancer treatment that uses hormones (given as drugs) 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 you use a needle 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 carried 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 (drugs), 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 gives you advice about food and nutrition. In Nova Scotia, a nutritionist may not necessarily be a registered health professional. They may have some training in nutrition.

**Oncologist**  
A doctor who has special training in treating cancer.

**Oncology nurse**  
A nurse who is trained to support you and your family and help you understand 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 externally 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.

**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).

**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.
Cancer Care Nova Scotia

Cancer Care Nova Scotia (CCNS) is a program of the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness. CCNS works with health professionals and district health authorities across the province to improve cancer services for Nova Scotia patients and families. Key programs of CCNS include:

Cancer Screening:
Cancer screening is about preventing and finding cancer early before there are warning signs. This is the time when treatment is most effective. CCNS operates two screening programs: the Cervical Cancer Prevention Program and the Colon Cancer Prevention Program. For information about these programs visit our website at www.cancercare.ns.ca or call us at 1-866-599-2267.

Education for health professionals:
CCNS develops and delivers continuing education programs to health professionals so they have the knowledge and skills necessary to provide their patients with high quality care.

District Cancer Programs:
In each of the nine health districts, these programs define and provide a range of cancer services in step with local needs and resources. Most districts, for example, offer cancer chemotherapy and palliative care.

Provincial Cancer Site Teams:
These teams (which are named by cancer site, for example, breast, prostate or head/neck), are responsible for reviewing practices and policies to improve cancer treatment. Their members include professionals with specialties in various cancers.

Cancer Patient Family Network:
This network is both an information-sharing tool and a formal communications channel that gives patients and their families a voice in shaping Nova Scotia’s cancer care system. To join this network or to get more information call 902-473-2637 or e-mail: info@ccns.nshealth.ca
**Cancer Patient Navigation:**

The cancer journey is complex, and cancer patients and their families can often feel overwhelmed with information, emotions, decisions and treatment options. Cancer Care Nova Scotia has worked with health districts to introduce patient navigation to better support patients and their loved ones. CCNS continues to support the patient navigation program by working closely with Patient Navigators to ensure they have the information and skills they need to support patients. Patient navigators (oncology certified nurses) are the backbone of this unique program. They provide a formal link between family physicians and cancer specialists, and they work closely with cancer patients and families to:

- educate them about their cancer and treatment options
- prepare them for appointments with specialists
- provide support for emotional, spiritual, financial, transportation and work-related issues
- address questions and concerns

Patient navigators are available in eight health districts – parts of Cape Breton, South West, Pictou County, Guysborough Antigonish Strait Richmond, Annapolis Valley, Colchester, Cumberland, and South Shore Health.

Your family doctor, cancer specialist, or any health professional can refer you to a Cancer Patient Navigator, or you can contact a navigator directly from your home community by calling toll-free at **1-866-524-1234**.

**Diverse Communities Cancer Coordinator:**

The Diverse Communities Cancer Coordinator acts as an educational link between the healthcare system and people of diverse backgrounds (for example, African Nova Scotians, Aboriginal communities, gays and lesbians, and immigrants). For more information call 902-473-7268 or e-mail: [info@ccns.nshealth.ca](mailto:info@ccns.nshealth.ca)
Notes and things to remember

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
This booklet is meant to support the information that your health care team gives you. It does not replace any information that your health care team gives you. This booklet was developed by the Nova Scotia Cancer Patient Education Committee, the Cape Breton Cancer Centre, Cancer Care Nova Scotia and the Capital Health Cancer Care Program.

WX85-0730 Revised March 2011.
The information in this booklet is to be updated every three years