



Patient & Family Guide

2024

Systemic Therapy Unit

Victoria General Hospital



www.nscancercare.ca

Systemic Therapy Unit Victoria General Hospital

If you have any questions about your appointment or need to rebook, please call:

› Phone: 902-473-6038

Please bring this guide with you to your appointment.

Systemic Therapy Unit

You have been referred to the Systemic Therapy Unit for treatment. We offer many services on the unit including chemotherapy, immunotherapy, cellular therapy, supportive care (such as blood transfusions hydration), and apheresis.

Depending on appointment type, your treatment may take place on the 11th Floor or 4th Floor of the Victoria Bldg. This will be outlined on your appointment sheet.

Please review this pamphlet to help you get ready for your appointment. If you have any questions, please ask your nurse when you arrive.

We hope to make you and your support person (if you have one) feel welcome and comfortable. If you have any questions or suggestions that may make your treatment easier, please talk with your treatment nurse.

Appointments

All appointments are booked in advance. When making your appointment, we consider:

- the length and type of your treatment.
- your care needs for that day.
- how busy the unit will be on that day.

Please arrive on time for your scheduled appointment. This helps us to avoid long wait times and cancellations. **If you arrive late, we may not be able to see you.**

If you are more than 30 minutes late, we will rebook your appointment.

If you must cancel an appointment, call the booking clerk as soon as possible. This lets us book another patient in your timeslot. **Do not come to the booking clerk's office.**

If you need to cancel or change an appointment, please call:

- › **Phone: 902-473-6038**

If there is no answer, leave a message with the following information:

- Your full name
- Your date of birth
- Your health card number

It may not be possible to change your appointment time.

If you miss your appointment because of bad weather, we will try to rebook it as soon as possible. Rebooking is based on patient care needs — urgent cases are booked first.

Where is the Systemic Therapy Unit?

The unit is located on 2 different floors of the Victoria General Building. (4th and 11th). Systemic Therapy (chemo and Immunotherapy) will be on the 11th floor. Supportive Care and cell collection (apheresis) will take place on the 4th floor.

Enter through the Dickson Building or Centennial Building and take the **Victoria General Building elevators** to the 4th floor or 11th floor depending on your location outlined on your appointment letter. When you get off the elevator, you will see the registration desk. The clerk at the desk will register you for your appointment. They will then direct you to the waiting room or to a treatment room.

We do our best to see patients at their scheduled appointment times, but sometimes this is not possible. We appreciate your understanding.

If you are in the waiting room for more than 30 minutes, check with the clerk at the registration desk. When the unit is experiencing delays with seeing patients, there will be a sign posted at the front desk and in the waiting room.

On your first visit, please arrive 15 minutes before your scheduled appointment time to register. Give yourself time to find a parking space, as parking is often limited.

Hours:

4th Floor - 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday and 7:30am to 3:30pm on weekends and holidays

11th floor - 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday only

How do I get ready for my appointment?

If you need bloodwork for your treatment, it should be done at least 1 day before your appointment, unless you are told otherwise. For the locations and hours of Blood Collection Centres, visit: www.nshealth.ca/blood-collection

If your treatment includes medication that may make you drowsy, you must have someone drive you home. Make sure to arrange this before your visit.

If you need help walking and/or going to the bathroom, call 902-473-6038 before your appointment to let us know. We will help you plan for your appointment.

Our treatment area is not safe for children of any age. Do not bring children with you to your appointment.

What will happen at my appointment?

Bring your provincial health card and this guide with you.

Wear casual, comfortable clothing and shoes. Bring a sweater in case you get cold.

Do not have phone conversations in the treatment or waiting rooms unless it is urgent as noise can be disruptive to other patients.

Bring **all** of your current medications in their original packaging so you can take any medications you need during your appointment. **We DO NOT have access to medications for you** (like insulin, blood pressure pills, or pain medications).

Bring items that may help you pass the time (like a book, magazine, cell phone, or tablet). If you would like to use a device with sound, you must bring your own headphones. Please remember to take all your belongings with you when you leave.

Do not bring any valuables (like jewelry, large amounts of money, or credit cards) to the hospital. **You are responsible for your belongings during your stay on the unit.** The hospital is not responsible for the loss of any item.

Can I bring a support person to my appointment?

You may bring 1 support person who is identified as part of your care plan to your **first** appointment. Please tell us in advance if you plan to bring a support person.

If you have a cognitive (thinking), emotional, or physical disability that affects your ability to come alone: You may bring 1 support person who is identified as part of your care plan to each of your appointments.

Visitors other than your support person are not allowed in the waiting room. Please ask staff if you have any questions.

What resources are available on the Systemic Therapy Unit?

We have pamphlets available to help you learn about your illness. Please ask your nurse if you would like a pamphlet. These pamphlets are also available online at:

- › www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources

A volunteer or staff member may be available to offer sandwiches and snacks between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m., Monday to Friday. If staff are available, they may also get you food and drinks.

If you have dietary restrictions or allergies, please bring your own food.

If you would like to buy food or drinks, there is a cafeteria on the 1st floor of the Victoria Building. Please buy items before your appointment, **as you are not able to leave the unit once your treatment starts.**

Bottled water is available. For your safety, **DO NOT DRINK TAP WATER** from anywhere in the building. If you have questions, please ask your nurse.

Language interpreters are available, if needed. We can arrange for help with most languages, including sign language (ASL). Please tell staff if this is something you need.

Your health care team

You are the most important member of your health care team.

Your health care team is made up of many people working together. Your doctors, nurses, and pharmacists, will give you information about your treatment.

It is important for you to feel comfortable with your treatment plan. If you have any questions or concerns about your treatment or progress, please ask any member of the team.

Your health care team is made up of:

Doctors

Your cancer care doctor will direct your treatment plan. You may see other health care providers while you are on the unit.

Nurses

Nurses in the unit will care for you as needed based on your treatment plan. Nurses on the unit have specialized education and training.

Pharmacists

An oncologist pharmacist has special training in cancer care. They work closely with your doctors and nurses to make sure your medications are the right ones for you at the right dose. They make sure your medications are safe and do not interact with each other. Your pharmacist also helps you understand why you are taking the medications and work with you to reduce their side effects.

Clerks

Clerks arrange your appointments and prepare your chart. They will greet you at the registration desk and direct you to your treatment room. They are also available to direct you to the right member of your health care team to answer any questions you may have.

Social worker

A social worker is available to talk with you and your family about your care at home or in the community. They can also talk with you about your emotional needs.

If you would like to talk with a social worker, please ask your nurse. A social worker will usually call you within 2 to 3 days. If your needs are urgent, your nurse can contact the social work team during your appointment.

Patient and family feedback is very important to us.

We would like to invite you to send any comments or suggestions on how to improve this booklet to education.cancercare@nshealth.ca or feel free to call us at 1-866-599-2267.

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:
<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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