Important Phone Numbers

- Emergency: 911
- Health link, non-emergency health information: 811
- Community and social services information: 211
- Family Doctor/Nurse Practitioner:

- Oncologists (Cancer Doctors):

- Cancer Nurses:

- Cancer Patient Navigator: 1-866-524-1234
  or directly to your Navigator:

- Treatment unit/clinic:

- Cancer Care Program, QEII, Patient Inquiries: 902-473-6067
- Hematology Clinic, QEII: 902-473-6605
- Cape Breton Cancer Centre: 902-567-7771
- Boarding, Transportation and Ostomy Program: 1-888-894-5353
- Continuing Care: 1-800-225-7225
- Drug Assistance for Cancer Patients: 1-877-330-0323, press option 3, then press option 3 again
- Nova Scotia Family Pharmacare Program: 1-877-330-0323
- Nova Scotia Seniors Pharmacare Program: 1-800-544-6191
- Sydney Evening Walk-in Clinic: 902-567-0318
- Other important numbers:

Cette brochure est également disponible en français, veuillez visiter le site www.cancercare.ns.ca.
# Cancer Care

A Guide for Patients, Families and Caregivers

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“Every care provider I had dealings with were kind, caring, dedicated professionals who made this scary, life changing ordeal much easier to deal with…”
Cancer Survivor

Introduction

This booklet is a general guide about cancer treatment in Nova Scotia. There is a lot of information in the booklet. You do not have to read every section. Refer to the table of contents and start with the sections that are of most interest to you. Take your time and jot down any questions you have for your Cancer Care Team.

This booklet was written with the help of cancer survivors and their family members. Cancer survivors and their family members 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.

Remember that every cancer patient is different. Your doctors and the other members of your health care team will give you the specific details about your cancer, your treatment plan, your Cancer Care Team and where you will receive your treatments. This booklet is not meant to replace any information your health care team gives you.

We welcome your comments on how we can improve this booklet. Call 1-866-599-2267 or email info@ccns.nshealth.ca.

This booklet is also available online, visit www.cancercare.ns.ca.

What should I bring to my appointments?

- A family member or friend with you to provide support, take notes and keep track of questions to ask your Oncologist (cancer doctor) or Nurse.
- Your appointment information to help you locate your clinic.
- Your medications in their original container (prescription medications, over the counter medications, vitamins, herbs, and other supplements) to show your Oncologist.
  - Bring enough medication to last your stay in Halifax or Sydney.
  - If you are being admitted to hospital, your medication will be supplied to you, including any medications you take that are not for cancer.
- A list of things you are allergic to, including medications and foods.
- Your Nova Scotia health card.
- If you have private health insurance, please bring that card too.
- A list of questions you want to ask (see page 4).
- A notebook and pen so you or your family member can take notes.
- Some Oncologists allow patients to record their appointments so they can listen to it again, ask your Oncologist if you can bring a recording device.
- Things to help you pass the time, like books, crosswords, music or knitting.
- Do not bring anything that is expensive or means a lot to you. Unfortunately, things can be lost or stolen.
“Take a family member or friend along… between the two of you, you will catch and retain more information that will be helpful later.”

Family Member

Hospitals are Smoke-free and Scent-free Spaces

To protect your health and the health of others, all hospitals in Nova Scotia are smoke-free and scent-free spaces:

• You cannot smoke on the hospital property.

• 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.

Where is my first appointment?

When you are contacted about your appointment, you will be told if you will be seen at the Cape Breton Cancer Centre in Sydney (see pages 30–34), the QEII Health Sciences Centre in Halifax (see pages 34–39), or at one of the oncology clinics closer to your home community (see pages 40–46). People living in Cumberland County may need to travel to New Brunswick or Prince Edward Island for their cancer care.

Children and youth may also receive some or all of their care at the IWK Health Centre in Halifax. Refer to the IWK’s website for more information about these cancer care services www.iwk.nshealth.ca or contact a Family Care Coordinator, 902-470-6910.

Some oncology services are located at other hospitals so patients can have some of their cancer care closer to home. For more information about the location of and services provided at these hospitals, see pages 39–46. The QEII and Cape Breton Cancer Centre manage all referrals to the satellite and chemotherapy clinics.

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

Some patients may need to go to the QEII or the Cape Breton Cancer Centre for some or all of their care:

• Patients who need radiation therapy.

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

• Patients who have head, neck, brain or gynecological cancers (female reproductive organ cancers).

• Patients who have hematologic cancers (blood related cancers).

• Patients participating in Clinical Trials, see page 23 for more information about Clinical Trials.

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. More 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 see you.

If you have waited more than half an hour past your appointment time, please check with the clerk at the reception desk.
Try not to cancel your first visit; it is a very important appointment. It can be difficult to schedule another time.

If you must cancel an appointment, please call the clinic where your appointment was scheduled to take place.

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 during my first appointment?

When you arrive for your appointment, a Clerk will greet you. The Clerk will ask you basic questions, like 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 Clerk will check with you to make sure that all this information is current.

The next person you see usually will be your Oncology Nurse. Your Nurse will meet with you before you see the Oncologist (cancer doctor) and will ask you important questions about you and your family. Your Nurse will help you understand the information you are given about your cancer diagnosis and treatment plan. Your Nurse will also help you with any fears, concerns or questions you or your family may have.

Next, your Oncologist will meet with you. There are a number of different types of Oncologists. You may see a Medical Oncologist or Hematologist (a blood disorder specialist) who decides what medications are needed to treat your cancer, or a Radiation Oncologist who is specialized in using radiation to treat cancer, or a Surgical Oncologist who specializes in cancer operations. Some patients see more than one Oncologist.

Your Oncologist will explain the type and stage of your cancer and will describe the best treatment for you. Your Oncologist will usually examine you.

The QEII and the Cape Breton Regional Hospital are teaching hospitals with a long tradition of providing excellent training for a variety of health professionals. During your visit you may meet medical residents and other students. Residents are doctors who have completed their medical degree and are now training to become specialists. Residents and 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 Oncologist or Nurse.

Depending on your diagnosis and treatment plan, a number of health professionals may provide your care. You will meet some team members at the beginning of your cancer treatment and others you will meet later. The Understanding Medical Words section of this booklet, pages 47–57, has descriptions of the members of your Cancer Care Team. Your Cancer Care Team may include:

- Medical Oncologist
- Hematologist
- Radiation Oncologist
- Oncology Nurses
- Cancer Patient Navigator
- Clinical Dietitian
- Dentist
- Enterostomal Therapy Nurse
“For my first appointment, I asked my husband to go with me because I was terrified and along with needing emotional support, it was important to have someone else to listen to all of the information because it was so overwhelming. The doctors and nurses are very supportive and encourage family and friends to be involved.”

Cancer Survivor

What questions should I ask?

We encourage you to be an active member of your health care team by asking any questions you have about cancer and your treatment. 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. Ask if you can record the visit to help you remember everything the Oncologists and Nurses shared with you.

Here are some questions that cancer patients often ask:

• What type of cancer do I have?
• What is the stage of my cancer?
• Has the cancer spread to other parts of my body?
• What are the goals of my care?
• What tests will I need?
• When will I get the test results?
• What are my treatment options?
• What are the benefits of the treatment?
• What would happen if I don’t have treatment?
• Where can I have my cancer treatment?
• Will I need to stay in the hospital overnight to have my treatment?
• When will my treatments start?
• If my treatments don’t work are there other options?
• What side effects am I most likely to have?
• What can I do to manage the side effects?
• Is it safe for me to use complementary therapies?
• What support is there for me?
• Will I be able to take care of myself or will I need help?

Why should I take a family member or friend to my appointments?

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 to your appointments. They can take notes for you or just listen to the discussions with your Cancer Care Team. They can help you remember things you have been told or may hear something you might have missed. If you have a family member living in another province who cannot attend your appointments, ask your Oncologist if they can join by phone.

• Family Doctor
• Health interpreters (also called translators)
• Nurse Practitioners
• Occupational Therapist
• Palliative Care Physician and Nurse
• Pharmacist
• Psychosocial Oncology Team
  • Advanced Practice Nurses
  • Psychiatrists
  • Psychologists
  • Social Workers
  • Spiritual Care Providers (Chaplains)
• Physiotherapist
• Radiation Therapists
• Speech Language Pathologists
• Volunteers
• Should my family have genetic testing to see if they are at risk for my kind of cancer?
• Is there any kind of support available for my family and friends?
• Who should I contact if I have questions after I get home?

A number of websites include lists of questions you may want to ask your Oncologist or Nurse, here are a few sites you may wish to visit:

- www.cancer.ca
- www.cancer.gov
- www.cancer.net
- www.cancer.org

Questions for You
What does your Cancer Care Team need to know about you, as a person, to give you the best care possible?

- Do you have particular cultural and/or spiritual beliefs that may affect your care?
- Do you have hearing, vision or mobility issues?
- Do you need translation services?

Take the time to tell your care team about the things that are important to you.

What happens after my first appointment?
Your Oncologist 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 get 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 Oncologist and Nurse will work with your local hospital team to arrange your treatment.

Your Oncologist will send a letter to your Family Doctor or Nurse Practitioner. Within two weeks of your first visit or your release from hospital, please make an appointment with your Family Doctor or Nurse Practitioner to discuss your understanding of your cancer treatment.

You may find it helpful to keep a journal, notebook or use page 58 of this booklet to write down your questions and the answers to your questions.

You may also want to start a calendar to keep track of all your tests, procedures and treatments.

“I had so many questions, I didn’t know where to begin, the Oncologist really helped… she explained everything clearly, I went home feeling hopeful!”
Cancer Survivor
What if I have trouble getting to my appointments?

Some people have difficulty getting to their appointments. 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 Cape Breton Cancer Centre Social Worker, 902-567-8551, the QEII Social Worker, 902-473-6067, or your Cancer Patient Navigator, 1-866-524-1234, for help.

The Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness Boarding Transportation and Ostomy (BTO) program provides financial help for travel and accommodations for eligible cancer patients. To take part in this program, you have to:

- Be a resident of Nova Scotia,
- Have a valid Nova Scotia health card, and
- Have a gross family income of less than $25,500 or less per year.

For more information call 1-800-563-8880.

Some communities offer shuttle services and/or volunteer driver services. The availability of these services will depend on where you live. Some services charge a fee. For more information visit www.communitytransitns.ca or call 211.

Sometimes local charities or other organizations can help with expenses like gas money. This will depend on where you live. Your Nurse, Social Worker, or local Cancer Patient Navigator can help you find out about local programs.

The VON Transportation Program

This service provides affordable door-to-door transportation for seniors and adults who need assistance because of a disability living in Halifax Regional Municipality. To register for the VON Transportation program, or if you would like more information please call 902-455-7433.

Accessible Transportation

If you need accessible transportation, there are some services available. Most of these services charge a fee.

If you live in the Halifax Regional Municipality, there is the Access-a-Bus service through Halifax Transit. You have to register for this service and book your trips ahead of time. To get a registration form, go to: www.halifax.ca/transit/access_a_bus.php or call 902-490-4000.

If you live outside of the Halifax Regional Municipality, go to www.accesstotravel.gc.ca or ask your social worker or Cancer Patient Navigator for information on local services.

In some circumstances you can claim your travel expenses on your income tax. For more information, please visit www.cra.gc.ca.
Should I have an Advance Care Plan?

Advance Care Planning is a process people can use to:

• think about what is important to them regarding health care choices
• explore relevant medical information
• communicate their wishes and values to their loved ones, delegate/substitute decision-maker and health care team
• record their health care choices and decisions in the event they can no longer speak for themselves.

Advance care planning may result in the creation of a personal directive; a person’s instructions about their future care and choice of treatment options.

For more information about Advance Care Planning visit: www.advancecareplanning.ca/

For more information about Personal Directives visit: novascotia.ca/just/pda/

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

There are several types of cancer treatments:

• Surgery
• Systemic Therapy (includes chemotherapy, immunotherapy, hormone therapy and biologic therapy)
• Radiation Therapy
• Bone Marrow/Stem Cell Transplant
• Combination Treatment (for example, systemic therapy and radiation therapy together)

Understanding these cancer treatments can help you talk about your choices with your health care team.

To learn more about cancer treatments review the Understanding Medical Words section of this booklet, pages 47–57, visit the credible websites listed on pages 29–30, or call the Cancer Information Service 1-888-939-3333.
Side Effects of Cancer and Treatment

Cancer and cancer treatment often cause a variety of side effects. Talk with your Oncologist about the side effects that are common for your type of cancer and your specific treatment plan.

Cancer treatments damage or kill cancer cells. Treatments can also harm healthy cells causing side effects. Some examples of side effects are skin redness, upset stomach 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. 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 when treatment ends.

During your treatment, your Cancer Care Team will help you manage any side effects you have. In some cases, the Palliative Care Team will help manage your symptoms.

To learn more about side effects by reviewing the Living Well With Cancer resources on Cancer Care Nova Scotia’s website www.cancercare.ns.ca or by visiting the websites listed on pages 29–30 of this booklet.

Sexual Health Changes

Cancer and cancer treatments can affect your sexuality and intimate relationships. New sexual changes often start at diagnosis, during or soon after cancer treatment. Changes in sexual health are very common side effects of cancer and its’ treatment.

Many things cause sexual health changes. Some are physical, like fatigue, pain or nausea. Others may be due to changes in how you feel about yourself, how you feel about body changes, changes in how things work sexually, strain in the relationship with your partner, changes in your ability to have children, or other aspects of your life after cancer.

Talk with your Oncologist or Nurse about your sexual concerns and the changes you have noticed. Do not hesitate to share your sexual health concerns before your Oncologist or Nurse asks you about your sexual health. Timing is important to address some changes; waiting can sometimes make things worse.

Members of the Psychosocial Oncology Team can work with people individually, or with their partners, to address issues. And, there are many sexual health and cancer resources you can access, such as those listed below.

You and your partner may like to visit www.cancer.ca (Canadian Cancer Society) to learn more about sexuality and cancer.

You may want to visit your local library to borrow “Man Cancer Sex”, “Woman Cancer Sex” or “After you Ring the Bell…10 challenges for the Cancer Survivor”.

“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
Managing Cancer-related Distress

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.

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/school, your finances, and your relationships with family and friends. Many people describe cancer-related distress as a general feeling of fear, discomfort or upset.

To better understand how you are feeling and coping with your cancer, your Cancer Care Team will ask you to complete a short questionnaire (called screening for distress). It will only take a few minutes for you to complete.

Once you fill out the questionnaire, someone from your Cancer Care Team will review it with you. You and your Cancer Care Team will then work together to decide on what might help you to deal with the concerns you identify.

Screening for distress is a quick way for your health care team to understand the issues that concern you the most. It can also help you play a more active role in your care. By letting us know about your concerns, we can help you manage them and provide you with information about services and resources that can help.

You may want to read “The Emotional Facts of Life with Cancer” booklet available by calling the Cancer Information Service 1-888-939-3333 or online at www.capo.ca.

What is Hyperbaric Therapy?

Hyperbaric therapy (HBT) enhances the body’s natural ability to heal. Not all cancer patients need HBT. HBT is only available at the QEII.

Your doctor may refer you for HBT if you have one of the following conditions:

- Bubbles of air in your blood vessels (arterial gas embolism)
- Burn
- Severe anemia
- Severe infection of skin or bone that causes tissue death
- Radiation injury
- Skin graft or skin flap at risk of tissue death
- Wounds that are not healing well

In a HBT chamber, the air pressure is increased to three times higher than normal air pressure. In the HBT chamber your lungs can take in more oxygen than you could breathing pure oxygen at normal air pressure. Your blood carries this extra oxygen through your body. This helps fight infection and improve healing.

During HBT you will be in the HBT chamber for about 90 minutes each day for a number of days.

For more information visit www.nshealth.ca/news/video-400-hyperbaric-medicine-maritimes-diving-hope.
Financial Concerns

For some people, a cancer diagnosis can have a big impact on their financial situation. Loss of income, travel expenses, medications, supplies and other costs can add to the stress of a cancer diagnosis. Tell your Family Doctor, Oncologist or Nurse if you have financial concerns, they will connect you to helpful programs.

Nova Scotia Health Insurance (MSI) covers the costs of treatments you receive at a hospital (including surgery, IV chemotherapy and radiation therapy). However, there are some treatments you may need at home that may not be covered by MSI, these include:

- Oral medications (pills) and other medications you buy at the drug store. These include medications for pain and nausea, as well as some types of cancer treatments.
- Nutritional supplements (for example Boost®)
- Ostomy supplies

It is a good idea to keep all your receipts for travel, food, accommodation and prescription expenses. You may be able to claim them on your income tax return.

If you have financial concerns, please ask your Nurse or Doctor to refer you to a Social Worker or Cancer Patient Navigator. They can connect you to government services and community organizations that provide financial support.

If you have any concerns about the cost of your medications, call the Social Worker at the Cape Breton Cancer Centre, 902-567-8551, QEII’s Medication Resource Specialist, 902-473-8241 or your Cancer Patient Navigator, 1-866-524-1234.

You can get more information about taxation issues from the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, www.cra-arc.gc.ca, and/or the person who prepares your tax return.

You can learn more about medication coverage and other financial matters by visiting www.cancercare.ns.ca.

“\textit{It wasn’t something we were prepared for financially, we just didn’t know about all the expenses we’d have.}”

Cancer Survivor
Group Learning Sessions for Cancer Patients and Families

You and Your Cancer Care
Cancer care is complex and it can feel overwhelming to understand the cancer care system. “You and Your Cancer Care” is a 2 hour education session designed to provide helpful information for those recently diagnosed with cancer and their family and friends. This session provides an overview of cancer care, common symptoms and concerns, practical supports, cancer and emotions, and how to access resources, supports and information. This session is not a support group, but participants have the opportunity to ask questions. Ask your Cancer Nurse for the date, time and location of upcoming sessions.

Preparing for Chemotherapy
This educational session provides information about chemotherapy, what to expect during treatments and coping with treatments and side-effects. Ask your Nurse for the date, time and location of upcoming sessions.

Managing Your Cancer-related Fatigue
Cancer-related fatigue (tiredness) is one of the most common side effects of cancer treatment. People who are dealing with cancer-related fatigue are encouraged to attend a 2 hour “Coping with Cancer-related Fatigue” education session. Family and friends are also welcome to attend. The sessions provide practical information about cancer-related fatigue and helpful management strategies. Available resources and supports are discussed. This is not a support group, but people have the opportunity to ask questions during the session. For the date, time and location of upcoming sessions, please call 902-473-7031.

Coping with Your Cancer-related Pain
Not everyone with cancer experiences pain but many people do. Pain can be caused by the cancer itself or your treatments. People who are dealing with pain are encouraged to attend a 2 hour “Coping with Cancer-related Pain” education session. Family and friends are also welcome to attend. This session focuses on understanding cancer-related pain and management strategies such as medication, managing energy and relaxation. Available resources and supports are discussed. This session is not a support group, but participants have the opportunity to ask questions. For the date, time and location of upcoming sessions, please call 902-473-7031.

“Most people dealing with cancer will display emotional distress at some point during their cancer experience. This is understandable given the many challenges associated with living with cancer. There are a number of supports available for people who are feeling distressed.”

Dr. Janice Howes, Psychologist, QEII
Even though I went to the Living Beyond Cancer session, I found it really helpful to review the videos of the sessions on Cancer Care Nova Scotia’s website.”

Cancer Survivor

Taking Control of Your Cancer-related Worry and Anxiety
Most people with cancer have some level of anxiety. People who are dealing with worries, fears, and anxiety are encouraged to attend “Taking Control of Your Cancer-related Anxiety”, a 2 hour education session. Family and friends are also welcome to attend. This session provides practical information about cancer-related anxiety, helpful coping strategies (such as deep breathing relaxation), and how to access other resources and supports. This session is not a support group, but people have the opportunity to ask questions. For the date, time and location of upcoming sessions, please call 902-473-7031.

Taking Control of Your Cancer-related Sadness and Depression
Many people with cancer experience depression. People who are dealing with sadness and depression are encouraged to attend “Taking Control of Your Cancer-related Depression”, a 2 hour education session. Family and friends are also welcome to attend. This session provides practical information about cancer-related sadness and depression, helpful coping strategies, and how to access other resources and supports. This is not a support group, but people have the opportunity to ask questions. For the date, time and location of upcoming sessions, please call 902-473-7031.

Coping With Cancer-related Brain Fog
Some cancer patients and survivors notice changes in their thinking and cognitive abilities during or after treatment. This is known as cancer-related brain fog. People who are dealing with brain fog are encouraged to attend a 2 hour “Coping With Cancer-related Brain Fog” education session. Family and friends are also welcome to attend. This session focuses on understanding cancer-related brain fog, management strategies and available resources. This session is not a support group, but participants have the opportunity to ask questions. For the date, time and location of upcoming sessions, please call 902-473-7031.

Life After Prostate Cancer Treatments
Life After Prostate Cancer Treatments is a 1.5 hour education session for men who have had surgery, radiation therapy or a combination of both for the treatment of their prostate cancer. Health professionals provide practical information about nutrition, physical activity, sexual intimacy and urinary control. This session is not intended to be a support group however people have the opportunity to ask questions after each presentation. Patients, partners and family members are welcome to attend.

Sessions are held in the Bethune Building Ballroom, QEII, throughout the year. An option is also available to participate at home via your computer. For dates of upcoming sessions or to register please call 902-473-6427 or 902-473-2964.
Living Beyond Cancer – What Happens Now
Living Beyond Cancer is a 3 hour class for people who have completed their cancer treatment.

This class is not a support group. The class helps people learn more about follow up care, how to deal with the short and long term side effects of cancer treatment, nutrition, coping and adjustment. It is also a chance to learn what services are available, to talk with the Cancer Care Team and meet other cancer survivors.

The class is held on a monthly basis in the Ballroom, main floor Bethune Building at the QEII and is available throughout the province via telehealth.

For more information about schedules and to register please call 1-866-599-2267, or contact the Cancer Patient Navigator in your area by dialing 1-866-524-1234.

Cancer Transitions
Cancer Transitions is a free, 2½ hour, 6 week program designed to help cancer survivors make the transition from active treatment to post-treatment life. The program is offered by Cancer Centre Staff in partnership with the YMCA.

Program leaders and guest speakers will discuss strategies for managing stress, eating nutritiously and managing your health concerns. A YMCA fitness specialist will lead you in exercises, tailored to your ability, at each session.

In Halifax, Cancer Transitions is held in the Weather Watch room, 5th floor, Dickson Centre, VG site, QEII. For more information and to pre-register call 902-473-3449.

In Sydney, Cancer Transitions is held in the Frank Rudderham Family YMCA, 399 Charlotte Street. For more information and to pre-register call 902-567-8074.

Ways to Wellness – Sydney
A program for cancer patients, survivors, and family members. Ways to Wellness provides information on living well with cancer, the role of nutrition and physical activity, stress reduction techniques, and complementary therapies. Please contact the program secretary at 1-902-567-8074 for more information.

Your Way to Wellness
The Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness offers a free program to help people manage chronic illness. This program is helpful for people who have recently completed cancer treatment. The group meets for 2½ hours, once a week for 6 consecutive weeks. Programs are offered throughout Nova Scotia. For more information call 1-888-672-3444 or visit yourway.novascotia.ca.

“Every patient should have a notebook to take notes at appointments and to jot down questions once you are back home.”
Cancer Survivor

Support Services

Art of Living Program – Sydney
This program links cancer patients with visual artists, writers, musicians and quilt makers. These artists work with patients, helping them create a personally significant art piece depicting their cancer experience. Completed works of art are publically showcased, giving participants the opportunity to explain and share their creation with members of the community. Call the Social Worker at the Cape Breton Cancer Centre, 902-567-8551, for details.

Cancer Patient Navigator
Your Cancer Patient Navigator is your guide through the health care system. They can provide support and answer many of 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 health care team to coordinate your tests and visits for cancer treatment.

After your treatment is finished, your Navigator can also help you with your follow-up care.

Cancer Patient Navigators are available in all areas of the province except Halifax and West Hants counties. You can contact your Cancer Patient Navigator by calling toll free 1-866-524-1234.

Continuing Care Services
Continuing Care Services are provided to eligible people who need care outside of the hospital in their home and community. Care can be provided on a long or short-term basis. Continuing Care Programs and Services include:

- Aboriginal Continuing Care
- Adult Protection Services
- Caregiver Benefit Program
- HELP-Bed Loan Program
- Home Care (Nursing, Home Support, Respite and Palliative Care)
- Home Oxygen Services
- Protection for Persons in Care
- Personal Alert Assistance Program
- Self-Managed Care Program
- Supportive Care Program
- Specialized Equipment Program (Long Term Care)
- Long-Term Care (Nursing Home or Residential Care Facility)
- Respite Care at home or in a Long Term Care facility.

To find out more about Continuing Care’s services, call 1-800-225-7225.
“I use the medicine wheel to help me with my wellbeing each day. Whether it is spiritual, mental, physical or emotional support: it helps me deal with my cancer in each moment. The spiritual part of my journey is most important for my healing, and that is why it is important to use the holistic approach.”

First Nations Cancer Patient

Horticultural Therapy – Sydney
Join a horticultural therapist in a gardening program open to patients at the Cape Breton Cancer Centre. Horticultural Therapy uses plants and gardening to improve emotional, physical, and mental well-being. Call the Social Worker at the Cape Breton Cancer Centre, 902-567-8551, for details.

Interpreter Services
We recommend that you ask for interpretation services in advance of your appointment.

The QEII provides patients, clients and their families who have a language barrier free access to:

- Telephone interpretation: www.languageline.com
- Face-to-face interpretation: www.interpretingservices.ca
- Mi’kmaq Interpreter’s Liaison Program: cmmns.com/program/health
- Sign language: www.sdhhns.org

Patients at the Cape Breton Cancer Centre or a Regional Hospital who need interpretation services should ask their Nurse for assistance.

Look Good Feel Better
The Look Good Feel Better program offers cosmetic workshops designed to meet the needs of women who are receiving chemotherapy or radiation therapy. Cosmeticians offer small workshops or seminars on skin care, wigs and hairstyles adapted to temporary hair loss.

This program, which is provided free of charge to all women living with cancer, is an initiative of the Canadian Cosmetic, Toiletry and Fragrance Association Foundation.

Look Good Feel Better workshops are offered on a regular basis at the Cape Breton Cancer Centre, the QEII and other hospitals throughout Nova Scotia (see pages 41–46).

For information about upcoming workshops in Halifax or to register call QEII Volunteer Services 902-473-5420.

For information about upcoming workshops in Sydney or to register call 902-567-8074.

You can learn more about Look Good Feel Better by visiting lgfb.ca.
Palliative Care

Palliative care provides physical, emotional, and spiritual support. It is an approach to care that improves the quality of life of patients and families facing serious illness.

People often think that palliative care is only for cancer patients who are dying. This is not so. Palliative care can be appropriate for patients at any stage of illness. Palliative care focuses on aspects of cancer treatment other than the cure; such as managing the symptoms of cancer (like pain) and the side effects of cancer treatment.

Palliative care can be provided by your Cancer Care Team, your Family Doctor/Nurse Practitioner, or in complex cases by a specialist Palliative Care Team who support your care team.

You and your family may like to visit the following reputable websites to learn more about palliative care:

- Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association: www.chpca.net
- Canadian Virtual Hospice: www.virtualhospice.ca
- QEII Palliative Care Program: www.cdha.nshealth.ca/palliative-care
- Nova Scotia Hospice Palliative Care Association: www.nshpca.ca

Patient Comfort Room – Cape Breton Cancer Centre

This is a comfortable, supportive area where people undergoing cancer treatments at the Cape Breton Cancer Centre can be introduced to massage therapy, Reiki therapy, yoga therapy and other services. These services are provided free of charge by trained volunteers. A wig bank is also available. Ask your health care team for more information.

Patient Library – Cape Breton Cancer Centre

The Cape Breton Cancer Centre has a patient library near the main reception desk offering a large assortment of reading material for all cancer patients at the Cancer Centre. Information is available regarding physical, spiritual, emotional and social aspects of living with cancer. Please feel free to use this space while you are in the Cancer Centre.

There is a direct phone line to the Canadian Cancer Society (CCS) in the patient library. The CCS offers a variety of information resources and support programs.

Peer Support

A number of organizations offer peer support services. These services are offered by volunteers who have had a cancer experience.

Visit the websites listed on pages 29–30 to learn which organizations offer peer support programs for your type of cancer or call the Canadian Cancer Society at 1-800-639-0222 or visit www.cancer.ca.

“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
“I found it a big help and comfort to talk to someone from my culture who had survived my kind of cancer, it gave me hope…”
Cancer Survivor

Prayer and Worship
The QEII’s Spiritual Care Chaplains are available to support you in reflecting on the meaning of suffering and provide assistance with healing and recovery whatever your cultural background, beliefs or religious affiliation. They can also connect you with Clergy, Denominational Chaplains, Faith Leaders and Lay Visitors, as available, from your own faith community. Call 902-473-4055 from 8:00am to 4:00pm. For after hours urgent matters, call locating 902-473-2220 and ask for pager 2494.

There is a sacred space located on the main floor of the Victoria Building, QEII, near the Eye Care Centre, that can be used for worship, prayer and meditation.

You can learn more about Spiritual Care Services at the QEII by visiting www.cdha.nshealth.ca.

The chapel on the main floor of the Cape Breton Regional Hospital is available to patients and their families for quiet prayer, services or reflection.

Ask a member of your care team to direct you to places of worship near the Cancer Centre or, for a complete listing look under “Churches” in the Yellow Pages of the phone book.


Psychosocial Oncology Team – QEII
It is common for a cancer diagnosis to create distress of varying degrees for patients and their family members. The QEII Psychosocial Oncology Team provides help for the psychological, emotional, spiritual, social, family, and symptom management issues that create significant distress for patients and their families. The QEII Psychosocial Oncology Team works with your Oncologist. The team includes Social Workers, Spiritual Care Providers, Advanced Practice Nurses, Psychologists and Psychiatrists.

You may want to read “The Emotional Facts of Life with Cancer” booklet available by calling the Cancer Information Service 1-888-939-3333 or online at www.capo.ca.

Resource Library – QEII
All cancer care areas in the QEII will have information available for you and your family. A resource library, supported by volunteers, is located in the Cancer Centre on the main floor of the Dickson building.
Social Worker – Cape Breton Cancer Centre
The Social Worker at the Cape Breton Cancer Centre helps people with cancer and their families manage and cope with the day to day challenges of living with cancer. They provide counseling, education, information, and advocacy. They can also help you connect with health care, government, and community resources. Call 902-567-8551 or 902-567-1702.

Sunshine Room – QEII
Room 11-017 – 11th floor, Victoria General building, VG site. The Sunshine Room is a comfortable, supportive area where people having cancer treatments at the QEII can have massage therapy, therapeautic touch and reflexology healing touch, Reiki therapy, yoga, art therapy, wig fittings and haircuts. Head wraps are available. These services are provided free of charge by trained volunteers. No appointment is necessary; please feel free to drop in.

Support Groups
A support group is a group of people touched by similar circumstances or issues. Support groups meet on a regular basis.

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.

Different support groups have different goals:
- Some groups focus on sharing thoughts and feelings about cancer. These groups help people to support each other and develop new ways to cope.
- Other groups focus on education of some aspect of cancer.
- Many combine both support and education.

It may help to discuss your goals with the person running the group to see if the group offers what you need. You may want to check out few different groups to find one that works best for you.

How can I tell if a support group is right for me?
It is hard to know if a support group will be right for you without going to at least two or three meetings. Once you have gone to a few meetings, ask yourself:

- Does this group help me to learn better ways of coping with my (or someone else’s) illness?
- Does it increase my sense of hope?
- Do I feel supported by other group members?
- Do I feel like I am in a safe and open place?
- Does it offer me helpful information (for example, good books, etc.)?
- Has it helped me learn more about my (or someone else’s) illness?
- Are the other group members encouraging?
- Do I feel better after attending the session?

A support group should make you feel comfortable enough to talk about what you think and feel. If it does not, speak with the facilitator privately. You may decide it is best not to continue going. Remember that it may take time to find a group that fits your needs.

“The Sunshine Room has been such a healing part of my treatment… it really makes me feel special… the Volunteers are amazing…”
Cancer Survivor
"I had never tried yoga or Reiki before, it really helped me relax during a very stressful time... the Volunteers are very caring...”
Cancer Survivor

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

- By dialing 211 or visiting the Nova Scotia 211 website, users can easily and quickly connect to the social, health and community services they need, anywhere in the province, regardless of where they’re located.
- 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.

Online Support Groups
- Cancer Chat Canada: cancerchat.desouzainstitute.com
- Cancer Connection: www.cancerconnection.ca
- Life with Cancer: www.lifewithcancer.org
- Survivor Net: www.survivornet.ca
- Young Adult Cancer Canada: www.youngadultcancer.ca/need-to-yacc/

Caregiver Support Group – Sydney
A support group can offer a caregiver the opportunity to learn from others, share ideas, and connect with people while being an emotional support for each other. A support group is an emotional outlet for the caregiver. Call the Social Worker at the Cape Breton Cancer Centre, 902-567-8551, for details.

Support for Care Givers
Caregivers Nova Scotia helps family and friends who are caring for loved ones. They offer many different kinds of caregiver support including phone and group support. Call 1-877-488-7390. Or visit caregiversns.org.

You may also like to visit Help for Cancer Caregivers at www.helpforcancercaregivers.org.

Tai Chi/Qigong – Cape Breton Cancer Centre
Tai Chi and Qigong are both types of energy therapy that can be of much benefit to cancer patients. Tai chi/Qigong therapies are particularly beneficial for anyone affected by cancer because it teaches people to respond peacefully and mindfully to forces out of their control. Ask your Nurse how you can access these services.

Yoga/Meditation – Cape Breton Cancer Centre
Gentle yoga and meditation for patients and family. It entails focusing on stress reduction and relaxation. Yoga can help improve mood, concentration, attention, energy and sleep. Complimentary every Tuesday, 2:00pm–3:00pm, in the Patient Comfort Room third floor, Cape Breton Regional Hospital.
“Many people are not certain they should voice their concerns or complaints about their care. Nobody can make any changes unless they know that a change is necessary. Your voice will let the medical team know a change is necessary.”

Family Member

Wig bank – Cape Breton Cancer Centre
A wig loan service is available in the Patient Comfort Room third floor, Cape Breton Regional Hospital.

Write On Program – Cape Breton Cancer Centre
This program brings together groups of five to ten people who live with a cancer diagnosis to write, read and share their stories. All writing forms are possible: essays, memoirs, journals, diaries, song lyrics or poetry. The writing does not need to be disease related and no writing experience necessary. Call the Social Worker at the Cape Breton Cancer Centre, 902-567-8551, to register.

Your 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 (see page 21) 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.
• 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: the hospital is a smoke-free and scent-free environment.
• Let your Cancer Care Team know if you have any side effects.
• Let your Cancer Care Team know how you are coping.
• Tell your Cancer Care Team if your Family Doctor changes any medication you are taking for any other health conditions.
• Respect the privacy of other patients.

Very early on realized that I had to become my own advocate…”
Cancer Survivor

What if I have concerns or complaints about my care?

The Patient Representative Service can address concerns or complaints you have about your care or your experience in the Cancer Centres or a regional hospital. They will work with you to improve patient care and services and encourage open communication, compassion and respectful partnerships between patients, health professionals and staff.

To contact a Patient Representative in Halifax, call 902-473-2133, toll free number 1-855-799-0990, or email healthcareexperience@nshealth.ca.

To contact a Patient Representative in Sydney, call 902-567-7268, 902-567-7225, 1-888-480-2233 or email patientrep@cbdha.nshealth.ca.

To contact a Patient Representative at a regional hospital, call the hospital switchboard.

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 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.

Answers to Some of the Questions Patients and Families Often Ask About Cancer

Most newly diagnosed cancer patients and their families have many, many questions about their cancer and their treatment. It is important that you feel comfortable asking your Cancer Care Team about any questions you have. In this section you will find answers to some of the most common questions patients and families have.

You may also be interested in reading the National Cancer Institute’s “Common Cancer Myths and Misconceptions” available at www.cancer.gov.
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.

What are the different kinds of cancer?
There are four main kinds of cancer:

- **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.
- **Sarcomas** are cancers that start in the muscles, bones and tissues that connect different parts of the body.
- **Leukemias**, or blood cancers, are cancers of the white blood cells.
- **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.

You may find it helpful to review some of the resources found on pages 29–30 of this booklet to learn more about your specific type of cancer.

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. People who look after themselves and are otherwise very healthy can get cancer.

A person’s ethnic origin (race) can be a factor in getting some types of cancer.

Cancer is also said to “run” in some families (hereditary cancer).

You cannot catch cancer from someone who has cancer. It is not contagious.

Could my cancer be hereditary?
Some cancers are hereditary (passed down through a family). In hereditary cancer there is a change in a gene, called a mutation that can be passed from parent to child. This genetic change increases a person’s risk of cancer.

Most cancers are not hereditary so everyone does not need genetic testing. Ask your Doctor about your risk of having a hereditary cancer.

You can also find information on the Canadian Cancer Society’s website, visit www.cancer.ca. Type “Genetic Risk and Cancer” in the search box. Or, call their Cancer Information Service 1-888-939-3333.

“...I’ve never had a major medical problem before, but I’m telling you they did everything, bent over backwards to help me.”
Cancer Survivor
How do doctors diagnose my cancer?

To diagnose (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 sample of tissue or cells from where a tumour may have spread. The Pathologist looks at the sample under a microscope and does tests on it.

A biopsy will show your Doctor if you have cancer and what kind of cancer you have. Knowing the kind of cancer helps your Cancer Care Team plan the best treatment for you.

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

Staging involves doing 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.

Grading compares the look and behavior of cancer cells to normal cells. You may have a biopsy or surgery, and then a Pathologist will look at the cells under a microscope to grade the cancer. Grading is usually described from 0–4 and can be different for different types of cancer.

Staging and grading give your health care 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 you may have are listed below and are also described in the “Understanding Medical Words” section of this booklet, pages 47–57:

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

To learn more about diagnosing, staging and grading cancer visit www.cancer.ca.

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 health care team if you can participate in clinical trials. Or your Cancer 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. You will still receive the best cancer treatment available.

For more information about clinical trials, visit www.canadiancancertrials.ca.

“Cancer affects more than the body. It also affects the mind and spirit. In addition, it can have an impact on one’s socioeconomic circumstance. A range of programs and support services exist to help patients and families contend with cancer’s troubling aspects. Taking advantage of what is offered could enhance the quality of life of all concerned”

Tom MacNeil, Social Worker, Cape Breton Cancer Centre
What are complementary therapies?
Before, during, and after cancer treatment there are other therapies that can help you with relaxation and pain management. Many cancer patients have benefitted from massage therapy, acupuncture, aromatherapy, First Nations Healing, tai chi and other approaches. Before trying any other therapy, talk to your Cancer Care Team about the benefits and risks. Together you can make the best decision for you.

We know quitting smoking can be very difficult. Ask your Doctor, Nurse or Pharmacist how they can help you quit or call 811.

To learn more about stopping tobacco use during cancer treatment visit www.asco.org.

Do I need to follow a special diet during my cancer treatment?
Most patients do not need to follow a special diet. Eating well during treatment can help you feel better and stay stronger. Even if there are times you do not feel well enough to eat it is important to:

- eat lots of fruits and vegetables
- choose breads, rice, pasta and noodles (preferably wholegrain)
- keep your muscles strong by eating enough protein – lean meat, fish, chicken, turkey, eggs, beans and nuts
- keep your bones strong by drinking milk, eating yogurt and cheese
- drink at least 8 glasses of water every day
- avoid drinking alcohol.

If you are having trouble eating, swallowing or maintaining a healthy weight, ask to see a dietitian.

You may find it helpful to read the booklet “Eating Well When You Have Cancer” available from the Canadian Cancer Society, call 1-888-939-3333 or visit www.cancer.ca.

You can also find helpful information about diet and cancer by visiting www.nourishonline.ca.
Can I be physically active during my treatment?
Research has shown that physical activity is a safe and effective way to help reduce the side effects of cancer treatment and lower the risk of cancer coming back (recurrence).

Being active before cancer treatment prepares you for the physical and mental stress of treatment and will help you recover more quickly.

No one activity is best. Choose activities you enjoy that you can easily access.

The type and level of activity will depend on how active you were before your cancer, the type of cancer you are dealing with, your treatment side effects and any other health issues you have.

You should aim to be physically active at least 150 minutes per week. Try and include activities that build strength at least two days per week.

Talk with your Oncologist or Physiotherapist about the types and level of activity that are safe and effective for you.

To be safe, if you have bone metastasis, peripheral neuropathy, suppressed immune function, or severe lymphedema, talk with your Oncologist before starting any physical activity.

Should I be concerned about my fertility?
If you are under the age of 40, protecting your fertility may be an important consideration in your cancer treatment.

The reproductive system can be affected by some cancers and cancer treatments, resulting in fertility problems. Men may be unable to produce an adequate number of sperm, or produce damaged sperm which cannot fertilize a woman’s egg. Women may be unable to produce eggs, conceive, or carry a pregnancy to term.

Talk to your Oncologist about the risk of infertility associated with your treatment. There are many fertility preservation options that can allow you to have a family in the future. Addressing your fertility before starting cancer treatment can help provide you with as many options as possible to have a family in the future.

You can learn more about cancer and fertility by visiting:
- www.cancer.ca
- www.aart.ca
- cancerkn.com/oncofertility-referral-network
- fertilefuture.ca

You can learn more about the benefits of physical activity for cancer patients by clicking on the Publications tab at the top of the Cancer Care Nova Scotia website at www.cancercare.ns.ca.
Why is it important to keep my mouth healthy during cancer treatment?
Having a healthy mouth can reduce your risk of the mouth problems that cancer and cancer treatment can cause. Good mouth care is important before, during and after cancer treatment.

See your Dentist as soon as possible after your cancer diagnosis. Due to the risk of infection, you might not be allowed to get dental work once treatment has started. If you see a dentist before treatment starts, dentists can take action to reduce the risk of mouth problems.

You may find it helpful to read the “Mouth Care During Cancer Treatment” resource available at www.cancercare.ns.ca.

What do I tell other people about my 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.
• Be prepared for difficult 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.

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.

Young Adults may find it helpful to read “Young Adults Caring for a Parent With Cancer”, visit www.cancer.net/coping-with-cancer/caring-loved-one/young-adults-caring-parent-with-cancer.

How do I tell my children about my cancer?
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 health care team can connect you with resource people who can help you talk with your children about your cancer and your treatments.

“I could only keep my cancer diagnosis from the kids for a week. They could tell something was wrong. Once I told them, a weight was lifted. We could have honest conversations from then on.”
Cancer Survivor
“When treatment is over, it is often the first time you really have a chance to pause and process the emotional and practical aspects of the experience, which can feel really overwhelming. The good news is that there are many ways to explore and cope with these feelings…”
Alyson Currie, Social Worker, Nova Scotia Cancer Centre

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 your local Public Library, the Cancer Program at the QEII or Chapters.

• Helping Children Cope www.cancer.ca

• Talking to Kids About Cancer www.cancercouncil.com.au


What is radiation therapy unit down time?
Like any piece of medical equipment, radiation therapy units sometimes need to be repaired. We call this down time. If the unit you are assigned to is on down time, your Radiation Therapist will let you know.

We will have the unit back in service as soon as possible. You will receive your planned number of radiation treatments, but you may finish later than you expected.

If down time occurs on your review day, you may or may not be seen or your review may be moved to another day.

If we need to order a part to repair the unit, the unit may be on down time for a few days. You may be assigned to another unit for your treatments. These treatments may be scheduled later than 5:00pm and your regular review may be on another day.

If you have any questions about radiation unit down time or your care in general, talk to your Radiation Therapist.

What happens after my cancer treatments have finished?
After your cancer treatments have finished, you will receive follow-up care (also called survivorship 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/Nurse Practitioner. Your Cancer Care Team will tell your Family Doctor about your treatment and any further tests or care that you should have. Through your Family Doctor/Nurse Practitioner, your Team at the Cancer Centre will stay in touch with you and monitor your progress.

Visit www.cancercare.ns.ca to review the long term follow up care recommended for your type of cancer.

Ask your Cancer Care Team about Cancer Transitions, Life After Prostate Cancer Treatment, Living Beyond Cancer or the Your Way to Wellness programs available in your area (see pages 12–13). These programs are for patients who have finished treatment and are getting back to daily life.
You and your family may also 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.

You may also like to visit these reputable websites to learn more about cancer survivorship:

- American Cancer Society: www.cancer.org/treatment/survivorshipduringandaftertreatment/index
- American Society of Clinical Oncology: www.cancer.net/survivorship
- BC Cancer Agency: www.bccancer.bc.ca/HPI/RecommendedLinks/coping/survivorship.htm
- Bosom Buddies: www.bosombuddies.ca

Where Can I find More Cancer Information?

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

Cancer Information Service

The Canadian Cancer Society’s Cancer Information Service is a national, toll-free service available to cancer patients, caregivers, families and friends, the general public and health care professionals. This service is available Monday to Friday in English and French. For other languages, an interpreter service can be accessed. Call 1-888-939-3333 (TTY 1-866-786-3934) or email info@cis.cancer.ca.

Living Well With Cancer

Living Well with Cancer is a collection of cancer information resources for patients and families developed by Cancer Care Nova Scotia. The resources are available in the Cancer Centre and online, visit www.cancercare.ns.ca.

Public Libraries

The public library in your community is a valuable source of cancer information. Most libraries also offer free Internet access.

Cancer Care Nova Scotia has partnered with the Nova Scotia Provincial Library system, to ensure Nova Scotians can access helpful books about cancer at their local library, including:

- After You Ring the Bell… Ten Key Challenges for the Cancer Survivor
- Man Cancer Sex
- The Essential Cancer Treatment Nutrition Guide and Cookbook
- The Healing Journey – Overcoming the Crisis of Cancer
- When a Parent is Sick – Helping Parents Explain Serious Illness to Children
- Woman Cancer Sex

Please speak to the librarian at your local branch about helpful books about cancer or visit library.novascotia.ca.

“I’m very much an information seeker.”

Cancer Survivor
Online Information
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.

We have included a number of reputable websites in previous sections of this booklet; you may also wish to refer to the reputable online resources listed below:

Websites with a wide range of cancer information
- Cancer Care Nova Scotia: www.cancercare.ns.ca
- BC Cancer Agency: www.bccancer.ca
- Canadian Association of Psychosocial Oncology: www.capo.ca
- Canadian Cancer Society: www.cancer.ca
- Cancer Care: www.cancercare.org
- Cancer Knowledge Network: cancerkn.com
- Cancer View Canada: www.cancerview.ca
- Cochrane Collaboration: www.cochrane.org/about-us
- Livestrong: www.livestrong.com
- National Cancer Institute: www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/PDQ
- National Comprehensive Cancer Network: www.nccn.org
- Young Adult Cancer Canada: www.youngadultcancer.ca

Cancer-Specific Websites
- Bladder Cancer Canada: bladdercancercanada.org/en
- Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada: www.braintumour.ca
- Breast Reconstruction: www.breastreconstructioncanada.ca
- Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation: www.cbcf.org
- Carcinoid-NeuroEndocrine Tumour Society of Canada: www.cnetscanada.org
- Colorectal Cancer Association of Canada: www.colorectal-cancer.ca
- Craig’s Cause Pancreatic Cancer Society: www.craigscause.ca
- Kidney Cancer Canada: www.kidneycancercanada.ca
- Leukemia & Lymphoma society of Canada: www.llscanada.org
- Lung Cancer Canada: www.lungcancercanada.ca
- Male Breast Cancer: www.cancer.ca
- Myeloma Canada: www.myelomacanada.ca
- Ovarian Cancer Canada: www.ovariancanada.org
- Prostate Cancer Canada: www.prostatecancer.ca
- Rethink Breast Cancer: rethinkbreastcancer.com
- The Breast Cancer Society of Canada: www.bcsc.ca
- Thyroid Cancer Canada: www.thyroidcancercanada.org
- Ostomy Canada Society: www.ostomycanada.ca

Cancer & Diet
- www.nourishonline.ca

“I saw so many incorrect things about cancer on social media, stick with sources you can trust.”
Family Member
“Family, friends and coworkers will all react differently when they learn you have cancer. Some will not know how to respond.”

Cancer Survivor

Childhood Cancer
- Atlantic Provinces Pediatric Oncology Hematology Network: www.apphon-rohppa.com
- Childhood Cancer: www.childhoodcancer.ca
- Cure Search: www.curesearch.org
- IWK Health Centre for Women and Children: www.iwk.nshealth.ca
- Pogo: www.pogo.ca
- Re-Mission 2: www.re-mission2.org
- Starlight Canada: www.starlightcanada.org
- Teens Living with Cancer: teenslivingwithcancer.org

Cancer Information for the LGBTQ Community
- Cancer’s Margins: www.lgbtcancer.ca
- National LGBT Cancer Network: www.cancernetwork.org
- National LGBT Cancer Project: lgbtcancer.org
- Prostate Cancer Canada: www.prostatecancer.ca
- Rainbow Health Ontario: www.rainbowhealthontario.ca

Blue Ribbon Kit
The Blue Ribbon Kit contains information for colorectal cancer patients. Your surgeon can give you a kit or you can review it online at www.cancercare.ns.ca/blueribbon.

Pink Rose Kit
The Pink Rose Kit is a package of information and guided support for people diagnosed with breast cancer. Available from the Nova Scotia Breast Screening Program www.breastscreening.nshealth.ca.

White Ribbon Kit
The White Ribbon Kit contains information for lung cancer patients. Your surgeon can give you a kit or you can review it online at www.cancercare.ns.ca/whiteribbon.

Where can I find Cancer 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 resources:
- Canadian Cancer Society: www.cancer.ca or call 1-888-939-3333
- Cancer Care Manitoba: www.cancercare.mb.ca
- Vancouver Coastal Health: 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 health care team about how this information applies to you. The BC Cancer Agency, www.bccancer.bc.ca, and the Canadian Cancer Society, www.cancer.ca, both have lists of websites in languages other than English. The Cancer Council of New South Wales offers information in a variety of languages, www.cancercouncil.com.au.

Where is the Cape Breton Cancer Centre?
The Cancer Centre is in Sydney at the Cape Breton Regional Hospital. Our address is:

Cape Breton Cancer Centre
1482 George Street, Sydney, NS B1P 1P3
902-567-7771
www.cbdha.nshealth.ca
When you arrive at the Cape Breton Regional Hospital, turn into the driveway and stay to the left. The Cancer Centre is on the left side of the hospital and has its own entrance.

You can also enter the Cancer Centre through the hospital. On the main floor (Level 2) take elevator 7 down to Level 1. The Cancer Centre is on your right as you leave the elevator.

**If you are travelling from mainland Nova Scotia:**
Follow Trans Canada Highway 104 to the Port Hastings Rotary. Take either option 1 or 2:

**Option 1**
At the Port Hastings Rotary, follow the sign: “Port Hawkesbury / St Peter’s / Sydney” and drive through the town of Port Hawkesbury. Continue on TCH 104 to St Peter’s. TCH 104 becomes Route 4 at St Peter’s. Continue to Sydney. Then take the “on ramp” to TCH 125 where the overhead sign reads “Sydney / Glace Bay / Louisbourg”. Stay on TCH 125 and then take exit 8. (See below for exit 8)

**Option 2**
Continue through the Port Hastings Rotary toward Baddeck and Sydney. Highway 104 becomes 105 as you leave Port Hastings. Travel approximately 140 km to the intersection with Highway 125. Take Exit 20E to “Sydney / Glace Bay / Louisbourg”. Stay on TCH 125 and take Exit 8. At Exit 8 turn left at round about onto George Street towards Sydney. Proceed to the next set of lights and turn left into the hospital driveway.

**If you are travelling from the Port Hawkesbury area**
take option 1 noted above.

Some oncology services are located at other hospitals so patients can have some of their cancer care closer to home. For more information about the location and services provided at these hospitals, see pages 41–46.

“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, lodging…”
Cancer Survivor

Where can I park at the Cape Breton Cancer Centre?
There is a parking lot near the entrance of the Cancer Centre. This is metered parking and has a limited number of spaces. Additional parking is located in the middle section of the first parking lot past the Cancer Centre for $3.00 unlimited time. There is a parking lot at the front of the Regional Hospital also for $3.00 unlimited time. Payment is made upon leaving the lot, so ensure you have the correct change (loonies or toonies only). You can buy weekly passes for this lot from the Hospital Foundation office on Level 2. If you use this lot, you can enter the Cancer Centre through the hospital.
“You can feel really isolated when you are a caregiver, it was helpful for me to have a support service to call.”
Family Member

Where can I stay when I am in Sydney for my appointments?

Symbol Key:
- Less than $100 plus tax
- From $100 to $150 plus tax
- More than $150 plus tax
- Telephone access
- Internet access
- Parking
- Breakfast available
- Patient rate may be available

Please keep in mind that all rates listed are subject to change at the discretion of the owners and operators. When booking your place to stay during treatment, it is important to identify yourself as a patient or family member. Also always confirm ahead of time what is needed to get the special rates.

Holy Redeemer Centre
24 Neville Street
Sydney, Nova Scotia
902-564-6155

The Holy Redeemer Centre offers accommodation for people from outside the Cape Breton Regional Municipality who are receiving treatments or have appointments or tests related to their care at the Cape Breton Cancer Centre. Accommodations and meals are provided free of charge through the support of the Canadian Cancer Society. If a family member stays with you there may be a charge for his/her meals and room.

You will be responsible for transportation and the cost of transportation from Holy Redeemer Centre to the Cancer Centre.

Arrangements for accommodations at Holy Redeemer Centre will be made by our Cancer Centre Staff. Our staff will also provide you with additional information for your stay at Holy Redeemer Centre.

Hotels
These hotels provide special rates to people with cancer and their families receiving care at the Cape Breton Cancer Centre:

- Cambridge Suites
  380 Esplanade, Sydney
  902-562-6500
  www.cambridgesuitessydney.com

- Comfort Inn
  368 Kings Road, Sydney
  902-562-0200
  www.sydneynovascotiacomfortinn.com

- Hampton Inn
  60 Maillard Street, Membertou
  902-564-6555

- Holiday Inn
  300 Esplanade, Sydney
  902-562-7500
  www.holidayinn.com/sydney

“If you are not comfortable driving in the city, ask friends to help with the driving.”

Family Member

Bed and Breakfasts
There are several Bed and Breakfasts in the Sydney area. Check the yellow pages of the phone book or search online.

• A Charming Victorian Bed & Breakfast
  115 George Street
  902-564-0921
  www.novascotia.com/places-to-stay/accommodations/a-charming-victorian-bed-breakfast/745
  Special diets will be considered. $ (based on room size and season)

• A Paradise Found B&B
  62 Milton Street
  902-539-9377
  www.paradisefoundbb.com
  Year round

• The Gathering House B&B
  148 Crescent Street
  902-539-7172
  Year round

• The New Century Manor Bed & Breakfast
  113 Moxham Drive
  902-567-1300
  Must make a reservation during the winter months $/$$ (rates depend on the season)

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

Other Services at the Cape Breton Cancer Centre

Banking Machine
There is a bank machine located next to the information desk at the main entrance on Level 2 and on Level 1 outside of the cafeteria.

Bus Service Cape Breton
Transit buses stop in front of the Cape Breton Regional Hospital. Please phone 902-539-8124 for a schedule.

Cafeteria/Other Food Services
The cafeteria is located on Level 1 at the rear of the hospital. The cafeteria is open to patients and visitors from 7:00am to 5:00pm, Monday to Friday and 9:30am to 5:00pm on weekends (except between the hours of 2:00pm and 2:30pm everyday).

Other food services are located in Health Park. To get to Health Park, follow the pedway that is located on Level 2 of the Regional Hospital. The pedway will take you directly to Level 3 of Health Park. Take the elevators or stairs on Level 3 down to Level 1. Tim Hortons and Subway are on Level 1.
“I couldn’t read while I was hooked up to the chemo so my friend borrowed books on tape from the library for me.”

Cancer Survivor

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**Change Machine**
There is a change machine in the main lobby of the Regional Hospital on Level 2.

**Taxi Service**
There are direct lines at the entrance to the Cancer Centre.

**Telephones**
There are pay phones at the entrance to the Cancer Centre, in the main lobby of the Regional Hospital (Level 2), and throughout the hospital in the main corridors.

**Vending Machines**
Vending machines are located in the cafeteria on Level 1 on Level 2. There is a beverage machine located in the main entrance to the Cancer Centre.

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**Where are the cancer care services at the QEII in Halifax?**

Cancer care services at the QEII Health Sciences Centre are in several locations at the **Victoria General (VG) site**. Our address is:

1276 South Park Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3H 2Y9
(see map on page 35)

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

Your first appointment with a cancer specialist may take place in an outpatient clinic. There are several different clinics located at the VG site of the QEII: the Nova Scotia Cancer Centre, the Hematology Clinic, Medical Day Unit, Surgery Clinic and ENT Clinic. Cancer care is also provided on a number of in-patient units at the VG and the Halifax Infirmary sites.

There are two main entrances to the VG site:

- University Avenue: this is the closest entrance to the **Dickson Building**, 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.
“It’s okay to be scared, angry, and to cry. Just make sure you share those feelings with your care team.”
Cancer Survivor
A clinic is also located in Lower Sackville at the Cobequid Community Health Centre, 40 Freer Lane, Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia, B4C 0A2.

When you are contacted about your appointment, you will be told if you will be seen at the QEII in Halifax, the Cobequid Community Health Centre in Lower Sackville or one of the satellite oncology clinics closer to your home community.

Children and youth may also receive some or all of their care at the IWK Health Centre in Halifax. Refer to the IWK’s website for more information about these cancer care services www.iwk.nshealth.ca or contact a Family Care Coordinator 902-470-6910.

Some oncology services are located at other hospitals so patients can have some of their cancer care closer to home. For more information about the location and services provided at these hospitals, see pages 41–46.

You can learn more about cancer care services at the QEII by visiting www.cdha.nshealth.ca.

Where can I park at the QEII?

You have two choices for parking:
- Pay parking lots at and near the VG site – hourly and full day rates (see map on page 35 for locations).
- Meters on the streets near the VG site.

Both inpatients and outpatients may 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 give 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 to see the social worker.

Where can I stay when I am in Halifax for my appointments?

Symbol Key:
- $$ Less than $100 plus tax
- $$ $$ From $100 to $150 plus tax
- $$ $$ $$ More than $150 plus tax
- ☑ Telephone access
- ☑ Internet access
- ☑ Parking
- ☑ Breakfast available
- ☑ Patient rate may be available

Please keep in mind that all rates listed are subject to change at the discretion of the owners and operators. When booking your place to stay during treatment, it is important to identify yourself as a patient or family member. Also always confirm ahead of time what is needed to get the special rates.
"The volunteers at The Lodge That Gives were angels.”
Cancer Survivor

The Susan K. Roberts Lodge That Gives/
Sobey Cancer Support Centre
Canadian Cancer Society
5826 South Street
902-420-1849 or 1-800-639-0222 ext. 223
www.cancer.ca

The Canadian Cancer Society's Susan K Roberts Lodge That Gives offers weekday accommodations for 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 or an escort required by a transplant patient. Family members and/or support persons can stay for $85.00 per night. This fee covers the cost of the room and three meals per day.

If booking for the first time at the Lodge That Gives, a referral must be sent to the Lodge from a Booking Clerk at the QE2 Cancer Treatment Centre, a Family Physician, an Oncologist or a Cancer Patient Navigator. If you have stayed at the Lodge in the last 6 months, you can make reservations by phone.

You may arrive the night before your appointment and are welcome to stay one night after your appointment, if needed. Limited parking is available.

The Sobey Cancer Support Centre also offers internet, hairdressing, wig fitting, support groups, and supportive care programming such as restorative yoga.

The Respite Room at the Sobey Cancer Support Centre is available for use by all visitors to the Cancer Centre. We have magazines, books, games, and free WIFI available to use while enjoying the space. The Lodge also offers nutritious meals to Cancer Centre visitors for an affordable price. Reservations for meals must be booked in advance by calling 902-420-1849.

Point Pleasant Lodge
Point Pleasant Lodge is associated with the QEII
1121 South Park Street
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 taxi 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 ($40.25 per night), 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 $12.00/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 your clinic. The meal vouchers can be used at either Point Pleasant Lodge or the hospital cafeteria.

Patients from New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island are given a daily meal allowance for their entire stay.
Hotels/Bed and Breakfasts offering discounted rates for patients
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**
  1980 Robie Street
  902-423-1161
  www.atlanticahotelhalifax.com

- **Chebucto Inn**
  6151 Lady Hammond Road
  902-453-4330
  www.chebuctoinn.com

- **Commons Inn**
  5780 West Street
  1-877-797-7999
  www.commonsinn.ca

- **Halifax Haven Guest Home**
  5897 Inglis Street
  902-421-1650
  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 $40 per night. Transportation may be available for patients.

- **Lord Nelson Hotel**
  1515 South Park Street
  1-800-565-2020
  www.lordnelsonhotel.com

- **The Garden South Park Inn**
  Bed & Breakfast
  1263 South Park Street
  1-877-414-8577
  www.gardensouthparkinn.com

- **Waverly Inn**
  1266 Barrington Street
  1-800-565-9346
  www.waverleyinn.com

- **Westin Nova Scotia Hotel**
  1181 Hollis Street
  1-888-627-8553
  www.thewestinnovascotian.com

Other Accommodations Near the QEII

- **Cambridge Suites**
  1583 Brunswick Street
  902-420-0555
  www.cambridgesuiteshalifax.com

- **Dalhousie University**
  University Ave, Coburg Road and South Street
  902-494-8840
  www.dal.ca/dept/summer-accommodations.html
  May-August only

- **Halifax International Hostel**
  1253 Barrington Street
  902-422-3863
  www.hihostels.ca/novascotia/331/HI-Halifax/index.hostel
  Basic hostel accommodations

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“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 weren’t any surprises.”

Cancer Survivor
“Never let your fears decide your fate.”
—Cancer Survivor

**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 Halifax Transit at 311 or www.halifax.ca/transit for routes and times.

**Food Services**
- Cafeteria: Main Floor, Centennial building, VG site.
- Tim Hortons: Main floor Dickson Centre and main floor Cafeteria in the Centennial building, VG site.

**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.

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**Fountain View Guest Home**
2138 Robie Street
902-422-4169
e-mail: fountainviewguesthouse@yahoo.ca

**Marigold Bed & Breakfast**
6318 Norwood Street
902-423-4798
www.marigoldbedandbreakfast.com

**Best Western Plus Chocolate Lake Hotel**
20 St. Margaret’s Bay Road
902-477-5611

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**Care Closer to Home**
You may be able to have some or all of your cancer care closer to your home. The decision about where you receive your care is based on the type and extent of cancer you have, the treatment you need, your individual needs, and where you live.

Please note, radiation therapy and other specialized services are only available at the Cancer Centres in Halifax and Sydney.

Your Family Doctor, Nurse Practitioner or Oncologist must refer you for your cancer care. Appointments are required.

When you are contacted about your appointment, you will be told if you will be seen at a Cape Breton Cancer Centre in Sydney, the QEII in Halifax or at a clinic in a hospital closer to your home.

Clinic options include:

- **Satellite Oncology Clinics**
  At a Satellite Oncology Clinic, the Oncologist travels from the Cancer Centre in Halifax or Sydney to a hospital closer to your home. The types of services available at a Satellite Oncology Clinic are visits with your Oncologist for a first appointment or a follow up visit.

- **Telehealth Clinics**
  Telehealth (sometimes called Tele-Oncology) is a service used by some Oncologists and other health professionals that allows you to have your cancer care closer to home. Telehealth connects you and your local Nurse or Doctor with your Oncologist or other health professional in Halifax or Sydney. Just like a regular clinic visit, you will be able to see and talk with your Oncologist.

  Telehealth uses a secure video camera, microphone and monitor. You will need to go to a hospital in your area that is equipped with the Telehealth equipment.
Chemotherapy Clinics
Chemotherapy clinics are located in hospitals across the province. If you need chemotherapy, you may be able to have it at a clinic in your area.

Cancer Nurses who have special training in how to safely give chemotherapy care for you in the chemotherapy clinic.

Please note, if you have your chemotherapy at a clinic in your area, you may also need to travel to the Cancer Centre or a Satellite Clinic to see your Oncologist.

General Practitioner Oncology Clinics
In some hospitals, General Practitioners in Oncology (GPOs) offer clinics for cancer patients. GPOs are Family Doctors who have special cancer training. They work closely with the Oncologists at the Cancer Centres to support patients receiving their care closer to home.

You may also need to access other services near your home community:

Cancer PatientNavigators
Your Cancer Patient Navigator is your guide through the health care system. They can provide support and answer many of 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 health care team to coordinate your tests and visits for cancer treatment.

After your treatment is finished, your Navigator can also help you with your follow-up care.

Emergency Care
Your Cancer Care Team will help you understand the signs and symptoms that should prompt you to go to the closest Emergency Department or call 911.

If you visit the Emergency Department for any reason, tell the Nurse and Doctor that you have cancer and give them a list of your current medications, including any chemotherapy.

Family Doctor/Nurse Practitioner
Your Family Doctor/Nurse Practitioner works with the Cancer Team before, during and after your cancer treatments. During your treatment, it is very important to stay in close contact with your Family Doctor/Nurse Practitioner. They will receive updates on your progress after every visit to the Cancer Centre.

Your Family Doctor/Nurse Practitioner knows you and your health history and can be a valuable source of help and advice. It is a good idea to make regular appointments with your Family Doctor/Nurse Practitioner during and after your cancer treatment.

“My friends helped me by talking about things other than cancer.”
Cancer Survivor
“When friends offer to help, let them. Make a list of things they could do.”
Cancer Survivor

Hospitals Providing Cancer Services:

Aberdeen Hospital
835 East River Road
New Glasgow, Nova Scotia  B2H 3S6
902-752-7600 ext. 1111

Cancer Care Services:
• Satellite Oncology Clinics are held monthly at the Westside Collaborative Medical Practice, 69 Abercrombie Road, New Glasgow, above the Sobey’s store.
• Chemotherapy Clinics are held daily at the Aberdeen Hospital.
• GPO Clinics are held Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Aberdeen Hospital.
• Cancer Patient Navigation
• Look Good Feel Better Workshops are offered on a regular basis; for information or to register call 902-752-7600 ext. 4922.

Directions to the Clinics:
You must first register at the central registry which is located on the ground floor. The oncology unit is located on the North West Wing of the second floor.

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.

For more information about services offered at the Aberdeen Hospital visit www.nshealth.ca, select programs and services, scroll down to Northern and then select Pictou County.

Cobequid Community Health Centre
40 Freer Lane
Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia  B4C 0A2
902-473-6000

Cancer Care Services:
• Satellite Oncology Clinic

Registration:
You must first register at the Cobequid Community Health Centre central registry.

Colchester Regional Hospital
600 Abenaki Road
Truro, Nova Scotia  B2N 5A1
902-893-5554

Cancer Care Services:
• GPO Clinic every Friday
• Chemotherapy Clinic
• Cancer Patient Navigation

Registration:
Patients register at the ambulatory care desk located in Building A on the ground floor of the Colchester Regional Hospital.
Other Services:

- The Serenity Room located in Building A, on the ground floor, is open to cancer patients and their families. It is a relaxing atmosphere where patients can receive wigs, head wraps, mastectomy bra and prosthesis. Complementary light massage along with hairdressing services are offered by appointments. Information on various cancers is also available along with a direct line to the Canadian Cancer Society. A phone for local calls is also provided.

- Look Good Feel Better Workshops are offered on a regular basis; for information or to register call 902-893-5554 ext. 42549.

- Cafeteria: located on the ground floor in building A. Hours of operation are 9:00am–1:30pm.

- The Coffee shop is located on the ground floor in building B. Hours of operation are:
  - Monday to Thursday 8:00am–7:30pm
  - Friday 8:00am–7:00pm
  - Saturday 9:00am–6:00pm
  - Sunday 11:00am–5:00pm

- Vending machines are located in the cafeteria and the emergency department.

- Parking lot is located at the front of the hospital and the maximum rate is $5.00 per day. To pay for parking your ticket must be validated and paid in the main lobby located in building B. If you are unable to pay for parking, a parking pass can be issued by the oncology staff.

- Pay phones are located in the main lobby in building B.

- A banking machine is located in the main lobby in building B and the emergency department.

For more information about services offered at the Colchester Regional Hospital visit www.nshealth.ca, select programs and services, scroll down to Northern and then select Colchester County and the Municipality of East Hants.

Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre
19428 Highway #2, RR #6
Amherst, Nova Scotia  B4H 1N6
902-667-6424

Cancer Care Services:

- Chemotherapy Clinic
- Cancer Patient Navigation

Directions:

The Chemotherapy Clinic is held in Ambulatory Care. When you enter the main door of the hospital, the Ambulatory Care clinic registration and the lab registration area are directly in front of you, side by side.

Other Services:

- Coffee shop located just past the ambulatory care/lab area on the left, past the gift shop. Open Monday to Friday.

- Vending machine located in the cafeteria area. The cafeteria no longer serves meals to the public.

- Banking machine and change machine located just inside the front entrance.

- Parking lot is located at front of hospital. Parking $3.00 per access. Handicapped parking is by meter, located close to front entrance and Emergency Room.
For more information about services offered at the Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre visit www.nshealth.ca, select programs and services, scroll down to Northern and then select Cumberland County.

Inverness Consolidated Memorial Hospital
39 James Street
Inverness, Nova Scotia  B0E 1N0
902-258-1900

Cancer Care Services:

• Medical Oncology Telehealth Clinic
• Radiation Oncology Telehealth Clinic
• Chemotherapy Clinics
• Cancer Patient Navigation: the Navigator located at the Inverness Hospital supports cancer patients and families throughout rural Cape Breton.

Directions to the Clinics:
Enter through the main door at the front of the hospital. Go to the outpatient department. Stop at the desk and ask for directions to the room where the clinic is being held.

Other Information:

• Cafeteria: A cafeteria is located on the main floor of the hospital. Hours of operation for the cafeteria are 9:30am–11:00am, 12:00pm–1:30pm, and 5:00pm–6:30pm.
• Parking is free of charge. Parking lot is located at the front of the hospital.
• Pay phones are located opposite the admitting desk.
• Lab service: main floor (yellow door).
• X-ray, ultrasound: main floor (purple door).

For more information about services offered at the Inverness Hospital visit www.nshealth.ca, select programs and services, scroll down to Eastern.

St. Martha’s Regional Hospital
25 Bay Street
Antigonish, Nova Scotia  B2G 2G5
902-867-4500 or 863-2830 ext. 4240

Cancer Care Services:

• Satellite Oncology Clinic
• Medical Oncology Telehealth Clinic
• Radiation Oncology Telehealth Clinic
• Chemotherapy Clinics
• Cancer Patient Navigation: the Navigator located at St. Martha’s supports cancer patients and families throughout Antigonish, Guysborough and Richmond counties.
• A Cancer Resource and Support room is located in room 4324.

Directions to the Clinic:
Enter via St. Martha’s Main Entrance, Level 2. Take the elevator to Level 4. After getting off the elevator, turn left. Follow the signs.

Other Information:

• Cafeteria: The cafeteria is located on Level 1. Hours of operation for the cafeteria are: Weekdays 9:00am–4:00pm, 5:00pm–6:00pm, Weekends/Holidays 9:00am–1:00pm.
• A healthy snack machine is located near the main lobby, Level 2.

“Ask lots of questions and take notes.”
Cancer Survivor
• Janet’s Canteen is located on Level 2 and is open from 8:00am–8:00pm weekdays and 12:00pm–7:00pm on weekends and holidays.
• Breakaway Café is located near the main entrance on Level 2. Serves light lunches. Weekdays 8:00am–5:00pm; Weekends/Holidays 1:00pm–5:00pm.
• Gift shop is on Level 2 next to Breakaway café. Open 9:30am–4:30pm, 6:00pm–8:30pm Monday to Thursday. Friday until 4:30pm and 1:00pm–4:30pm on weekends and holidays.
• Parking lot is located at front of hospital. Parking fees apply. Ask about reduced rates for frequent visits.
• Pay phones are located in the lobby, Level 2.
• A banking machine is located near the main entrance of the hospital, Level 2.
• X-ray, CT scan, MRI and outpatient lab collection are located on Level 2.

For more information about services offered at St. Martha’s Hospital visit www.nshealth.ca, select programs and services, scroll down to Eastern.

Directions to the clinic:
Enter through the main doors and register at the front desk. The Chemotherapy Clinic is located on the 3rd floor. Turn right off the elevator or left if using the stairs.

Other Information:
• Cafeteria located on the first floor. Hours of operation Monday to Friday 7:30am–1:30pm. Closed weekends and holidays.
• Vending machine located on main floor across from gift shop.
• Banking machine and change machine located on main floor.
• Parking lot is located at front of hospital. Parking is $4.00 a day.
• The Journey Room: The Journey Room is a welcoming place where cancer patients and their families can go to think, relax or talk about their cancer journey. The Journey Room is located on the 3rd floor of the South Shore Regional Hospital, across from the Oncology Clinic. Three days a week, volunteers will be present to help patients find information, connect with resources or just provide a quiet place to talk.

The Journey Room will also provide introductory sessions to therapies that may help patients and their caregivers cope with their diagnosis, manage their symptoms or deal with the stress of living with cancer. These therapies will be offered on a weekly basis. The Journey Room will also provide hairdressing services for those patients who need assistance with wig care and hat and head scarf selection.

South Shore Regional Hospital
90 Glen Allen Drive
Bridgewater, Nova Scotia  B4V 3S6
902-527-5820

Cancer Care Services:
• Chemotherapy Clinic
• Cancer Patient Navigation
Look Good Feel Better Workshops are offered on a regular basis; for information or to register call 902-527-5820.

For more information about services offered at the South Shore Regional Hospital, visit www.nshealth.ca, select programs and services, scroll down to Western and then select Lunenburg and Queens Counties.

Valley Regional Hospital
150 Exhibition Street
Kentville, Nova Scotia  B4N 5E3
902-679-2835

Cancer Care Services:

- Satellite Oncology Clinic operates Monday to Friday, excluding holidays.
- Chemotherapy Clinic is held Monday to Friday, excluding holidays.
- Cancer Patient Navigation, hours vary weekly.

Directions to the Clinic:

Enter through the main doors at the Valley Regional Hospital.

Central registration is in the main lobby; please follow the registration process by taking a number and registering at the window. You must register before proceeding to the unit. Once you are registered, the oncology unit receives notification and knows you have arrived.

By Stairs: Go up the main stairs (one level) and turn right. Turn immediately left and walk along the atrium, the Ambulatory/Oncology waiting room is on your right through the green doors, please take a seat and you will be called in.

By Elevator: After coming in the main entrance, go through the lobby and turn left at the base of the stairs, the elevator will be on your left. Take the elevator to the 3rd floor, upon exiting the elevator, turn right and then right again and walk along the atrium, the Ambulatory/Oncology waiting room is on your right through the green doors, please take a seat and you will be called in.

Other Information:

- Cafeteria: A cafeteria is located in the hospital. Hours of operation for the cafeteria are: 7:30am–2:00pm.
- There is a kiosk located in the lobby serving tea, coffee and snacks operating from 7:30am–9:15pm daily.
- The parking lot is located at the front of hospital; parking is $3.00 a day.
- Pay phones are located at the main entrance.
- A “Look Good Feel Better” program is offered at the site, the program offers women the power of sharing and support along their cancer journey. The program is held every second Saturday of every other month in the private dining room of the cafeteria. To enroll call 902-679-2835.

For more information about services offered at the Valley Regional Hospital, ask your health care team for the Patient Information Manual or visit www.nshealth.ca, select programs and services, scroll down to Western and then select Annapolis and Kings Counties.

“Ask about the services in your community, they can really help.”

Family Member
“If you live outside the city and need radiation be prepared for lots of driving.”
Family Member

Yarmouth Regional Hospital
60 Vancouver Street
Yarmouth, Nova Scotia B5A 2P5
1-888-749-1381

Cancer Care Services:
• Medical Oncology Telehealth Clinics are held three days each month.
• Radiation Oncology Telehealth Clinic is held one day each month.
• Chemotherapy Clinics are offered on weekdays, excluding holidays.
• Cancer Patient Navigation
• The Cancer Patient and Family Resource Room offers cancer information, DVDs, wigs, head wraps, breast prostheses and mastectomy bras. It is open daily from 8:00am–4:00pm.
• The Harmony Room offers free complementary therapies including therapeutic touch.

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

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 to Friday. Weekend and Holiday hours are: 9:30am–1:00pm and 4:00pm–6:00pm.
• Parking is a flat rate of $4.00. 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.
• A banking machine is located in the main lobby of the hospital. A change machine is located in the main lobby of the hospital.
• Look Good Feel Better Workshops are offered on a regular basis; for information or to register call 902-749-1523.

For more information about services offered at the Yarmouth Regional Hospital, visit www.nshealth.ca, select programs and services, scroll down to Western and then select Digby, Shelburne and Yarmouth counties.

Hand Hygiene
Hand hygiene is the most important way to prevent the spread of infection. There are hand sanitizer pumps throughout every hospital.

If your hands are visibly soiled, washing them with soap and water is recommended.
“There are so many new words and a different terminology to take in, it can be overwhelming! I wrote the ones that my mother didn’t understand down in her journal. I would then ask what they meant and write that down in the journal for future reference. It also helped me to explain things to my siblings when they would call.”

Family Member

**Understanding Medical Words**

During your cancer treatment you will hear a number of medical words that may be new to you. Below you will find definitions for some of the more common terms used in cancer care.

If you are looking for a word that is not on this list, check the Canadian Cancer Society’s website www.cancer.ca or the National Cancer Institute’s Dictionary of Cancer Terms www.cancer.gov/dictionary.

If you are looking for information about cancer drugs, check the medication information sheets on Cancer Care Nova Scotia’s website www.cancercare.ns.ca/en/home/healthprofessionals/stp/default.aspx.

**Ablation** A treatment that removes or destroys cells, tissues or organs. Ablation may be done by surgery, radiation, chemicals, heat, high-frequency electrical current, radiofrequency waves, lasers or other methods.

**Absolute Neutrophil Count (ANC)** A measure of the number of neutrophils in the blood. Neutrophils are a type of white blood cell. They help the body fight infection. The lower a person’s absolute neutrophil count is, the higher the risk of getting an infection. Cancer treatment, such as chemotherapy, may reduce the ANC.

**Active Surveillance** A treatment plan that involves closely monitoring a patient but not giving any treatment unless there are changes in test results that show the condition is getting worse. This approach may be used to avoid or delay the need for treatments like radiation therapy or surgery, which can cause side effects. During active surveillance, certain exams and tests are done on a regular schedule.

**Adenocarcinoma** Cancer that starts in glandular tissue, such as in the ducts or lobules of the breast or in the gland cells of the prostate. See also glandular cells, prostate.

**Adenoma** A benign (not cancer) growth starting in the glandular tissue.

**Adhesions** Scar tissue that forms after surgery or injury. If the scar tissue tightens, it may hold together organs that are normally separate. This can sometimes cause problems like a partial or total blockage of the intestine.

**Adjuvant Therapy** Treatment given in addition to the first treatment to help reduce the risk of cancer coming back.

**Administrative Assistants** Administrative Assistants play a large role in the Cancer Center. They work closely with the Oncology Team to schedule your tests, book appointments and support your treatment process.

**Advance Care Planning** Advance Care Planning is a process people can use to think about what is important to them regarding health care choices and communicate their wishes and values to their loved ones, substitute decision-maker and health care team. Advance care planning may result in the creation of a personal directive; a person’s instructions about their future care and choice of treatment options.
Advanced Cancer  A term to describe stages of cancer when the disease has spread from where it started (the primary site) to other parts of the body. When the cancer has spread only to the nearby areas, it is called locally advanced cancer. If it has spread to distant parts of the body, it is called metastatic cancer.

Advanced Practice Nurses  Advanced Practice Nurses such as Clinical Nurse Specialists and Nurse Practitioners, have completed specialized oncology education. They help you manage symptoms (like fatigue, sexual health issues, anxiety and depression), provide education about your cancer and your treatments, and offer counseling to cope with distressing thoughts, feelings, fears and concerns.

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. Radiation therapy only causes hair loss in the treatment area. Your hair will most likely grow back.

Alternative Therapy  An unproven therapy that is used instead of standard medical treatment. Some alternative therapies cause harmful or even life-threatening side effects. With others, the main harm is that the patient may lose the chance to benefit from standard treatment. Patients thinking about using any alternative or complementary therapy should discuss it first with their Oncologist.

Androgen  Hormones found in both men and women, with much higher levels in men. Commonly called male sex hormones. Testosterone is the major androgen.

Androgen Deprivation Therapy (ADT)  Treatment to reduce levels of androgens (male hormones) in the body. For example, since androgens cause prostate cancer to grow, ADT makes prostate cancers shrink or grow more slowly.

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.

Anesthesia  The loss of feeling as a result of drugs. General anesthesia causes loss of consciousness (puts you to a deep sleep so you don’t feel pain during surgery). Local or regional anesthesia numbs only a certain area.

Anti-emetics  Medicine that you might take to reduce or prevent nausea (feeling like you will throw up) and vomiting (throwing up).

Anti-estrogen  A drug that blocks the effects of estrogen on tumours. Anti-estrogens are used to treat breast cancers that depend on estrogen for growth. For example tamoxifen.

Aromatase Inhibitors  Drugs that keep the adrenal glands from making estrogens. They are used to treat hormone-sensitive breast cancer in women after menopause. Letrozole is a commonly used aromatase inhibitor.
**Autologous Transplant**  A transplant that uses your own bone marrow or stem cells.

**Benign**  Non-cancerous or non-malignant (no cancer).

**Biomarkers**  A substance made by cancer cells and sometimes normal cells. Tumour markers may be useful in watching for a response to treatment after a cancer is diagnosed or looking for cancer that has come back. Also called tumour markers.

**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.

**Biotherapy**  A type of treatment that uses substances made from living organisms to treat disease. Some biotherapies stimulate or suppress the immune system to help the body fight cancer, infection and other diseases. Other biotherapies attack specific cancer cells, which may help keep them from growing or kill them. They may also lessen certain side effects caused by some cancer treatments. Types of biotherapy include immunotherapy (such as vaccines, cytokines, and some antibodies), gene therapy and some targeted therapies. Also called biological response modifier therapy, biological therapy, and BRM therapy.

**Bone Scan**  A radioactive dye is injected into the blood, collects in the bones and is detected by a scanner. Bone scans can detect unusual changes to the bone, such as areas of fast growth.

**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 (BMT)**  See Stem Cell Transplant.

**BRCA1**  A gene which, when damaged, raises a person’s risk of developing breast, ovarian, prostate, and other types of cancer.

**BRCA2**  A gene which, when damaged (mutated), raises a person’s risk of developing breast, ovarian, prostate, and other types of cancer.

**Brachytherapy**  A type of radiation therapy that uses implants (needles, catheters, wires or seeds) to deliver radiation directly into or near a tumour.

**Brain Fog**  Some cancer patients and survivors notice changes in their thinking and cognitive abilities during or after treatment. This is known as cancer-related brain fog. It is also called chemo-brain or cancer-induced brain fog.

**Breast-Conserving Surgery (BCS)**  A surgical procedure to remove a tumour along with a margin of healthy tissue surrounding the tumour, while saving most of the breast. Also called breast-sparing surgery, lumpectomy or partial mastectomy.

**Breast Reconstruction**  A surgical procedure to rebuild the breast after mastectomy (a surgical procedure to remove a breast).

**CA 19-9**  A tumour marker that can be produced by colorectal, stomach, bile duct, and pancreatic cancers.

**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.

Cancer Doctors  Doctors who specialize in cancer care are called Oncologists.

Cancer Nurses (Oncology Nurses)  Registered Nurses who are skilled and experienced in cancer care. They will help to support and care for you and your family. Your Oncology Nurse works with your Doctor to assess and plan your treatments and will help you understand your treatment plan. An Oncology Nurse will be the one to give you your systemic therapy and help you manage any side effects.

Cancer Patient Navigators  Your Cancer Patient Navigator is your guide through the health care system. They can provide support and answer many of your questions. They can give you information that helps explain the different aspects of cancer and its treatment. They can also connect you with support services in your community. Navigators also work with members of your health care team to coordinate your tests and visits for cancer treatment. After your treatment is finished, your Navigator can also help you with your follow-up care.

Cancer-related Fatigue  An unusual and lasting tiredness that can occur with cancer or cancer treatments. It can be overwhelming, last a long time, and interfere with everyday life. Rest does not always relieve it. Physical activity is the best way to manage cancer-related fatigue.

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  A cancer treatment that uses drugs to kill cancer cells or stop them from growing. Also called systemic therapy.

Clinical Dietitian  Clinical Dietitians are trained and skilled in the nutritional care of people with cancer. The dietitian can help you deal with eating problems, weight changes, special diets and nutritional supplements. Before, during, and after cancer treatment the dietitian can also give you nutrition information and answer your questions and concerns about a variety of topics like healthy eating, vitamin and mineral supplements, vegetarianism and alternative therapies.

Clinical Nurse Specialists  Registered Nurses with specialized training. They provide expert support to health care teams and offer advanced care to patients and families.

Combination Therapy  When more than one cancer treatment is used to treat your cancer. For example, you may have chemotherapy and radiation therapy.

Complementary Therapies  A group of diverse practices and products that are not generally considered to be part of conventional medicine (e.g. yoga, massage, vitamins and supplements) but can be used in addition to conventional medicine.
Computed Tomography (CT) Scan  An imaging technique that uses a computer to put a series of x-ray images together to create a 3-dimensional picture of organs, tissues, bones and blood vessels inside the body. A contrast medium may be injected to make organs and structures show up clearly on the x-ray images. The image produced is called a CT scan.

Concurrent Treatment  A treatment or therapy that is given at the same time as another treatment.

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.

Cytotoxic  Something that kills cells. Chemotherapy and radiation therapy are examples of cytotoxic therapy.

Cytotoxic Precautions  Special procedures used to make sure that other people do not come in contact with your cancer treatment or body fluids. These precautions are needed when handling your cancer treatment or body fluids.

Dentist  Cancer drugs and radiation therapy can cause changes in the mouth, such as soreness or dryness. Your Dentist can help you manage mouth problems and your dental care. Patients who have head or neck cancers will need to see special Dentists (called Prosthodontists).

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  When you have more than three bowel movements per day and that what comes out is watery (not solid).

Disease-free Survival Rate  The percentage of people with a certain type cancer who are still living and have no evidence of cancer at a certain period of time (usually 5 years) after treatment.

Dysphagia  Trouble swallowing or eating.

Edema  Swelling caused by an abnormal buildup of fluid in the body.

Enterostomal Therapy Nurse (ET Nurse)  An ET Nurse is a Registered Nurse with advanced and specialized knowledge and clinical skills in wound, ostomy and continence care. ET Nurses support cancer patients by providing: pre-surgical education, stoma siting, ostomy care education including return to normal activities of daily living, sexual health and psychosocial counseling, discharge planning and out-patient follow-up.

Estrogen Receptor (ER)  A protein in some healthy and cancerous (malignant) cells that binds with estrogen. An estrogen receptor assay (test) is used to find out if breast cancer cells have estrogen receptors, which will help doctors to decide a treatment plan. If cells have estrogen receptors, they are estrogen receptor positive (ER+). If the cells don’t have estrogen receptors, they are estrogen receptor negative (ER-).
**External Beam Radiation**  A type of radiation therapy that uses a machine outside the body to direct radiation at a tumour and surrounding tissue.

**Family Doctor**  Your Family Doctor works with the Cancer Team before, during and after your cancer treatments. During your treatment, it is very important to stay in close touch with your Family Doctor. Your Doctor will receive updates on your progress after every visit to the Cancer Centre. Your Family Doctor knows you and your health history and can be a valuable source of help and advice. It is a good idea to make regular appointments with your Family Doctor during and after your treatment.

**Fatigue**  Feeling very tired or weak. It is a common side effect of cancer and cancer treatments.

**Genetic Counseling**  A Genetic Counselor is a health care professional who helps people to understand the personal and scientific aspects of genetics, clarify genetic risk assessment and present information and available options to help people make informed decisions.

**Grading**  The process of comparing the look and behavior of cancer cells to normal cells. You may have a biopsy or surgery then a pathologist will look at the cells under a microscope to grade the cancer. Grading is usually described from 0–4 and can be different for different types of cancer.

**Gynecological Oncologist**  A Doctor who has special training in treating women with tumours of the ovary, womb, or cervix.

**Hand-Foot Syndrome**  A group of symptoms that include pain, tingling, numbness, redness and scaling or shedding of skin on the hands and feet. Hand-foot syndrome is a side effect of some chemotherapy drugs.

**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.

**Health Interpreters (also called translators)**  A person who provides cultural and language translation within a health care setting.

**Hematologist**  A doctor who has special training in treating blood diseases, including cancers of the blood 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**  Treatment that adds, blocks, or removes hormones. To slow or stop the growth of certain cancers (such as prostate and breast cancer), synthetic hormones or other drugs may be given to block the body’s natural hormones. Sometimes surgery is needed to remove the gland that makes a certain hormone. Also called endocrine therapy, hormonal therapy, and hormone treatment.

**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.
Hyperbaric Therapy (HBT) A treatment that uses pressurized oxygen to help tissues heal.

Immunotherapy A type of biological therapy that uses substances to stimulate or suppress the immune system to help fight cancer, infection, and other diseases.

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.

Lymph Nodes Lymph nodes play an important part in the defense against infection by acting as a filtering system. The lymphatic system is a complex network of vessels, valves, ducts, nodes, and organs. It helps to protect and maintain the body's fluid environment by producing, filtering and carrying lymph and by making various 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.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) An imaging technique that uses a magnetic field to produce pictures of areas inside the body. A contrast medium may be injected into the body to make structures and organs show up clearly on the image. Doctors use MRI to make detailed images of organs and tissues in the body.

Malignant Cancerous. Malignant cells can invade and destroy nearby tissue and spread to other parts of the body.

Mammogram An X-ray of the breast that is taken with a machine that flattens the breast. A mammogram can help your Doctor decide whether a lump in the breast is a gland, a harmless cyst, or a tumour. If the mammogram result raises suspicions about cancer, a biopsy is usually the next step.

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.
Nuclear Scan  An imaging technique that uses a small amount of radioactive substance (called a radioisotope). The radioisotope is injected into the body and collects in certain tissues. A scanner takes pictures of the radiation given off by the radioisotope and creates an image of the organs or structures.

Nurse Practitioner (NP)  A Registered Nurse with specialized training. Some Nurse Practitioners are in community based primary care practices and provide care similar to a Family Doctor. Others are in a Cancer Centre where they work with other team members, including your Oncologist, to diagnose and treat your cancer as well as manage your symptoms and side effects.

Nutritionist  A person who gives you advice about food and nutrition. In Nova Scotia, a nutritionist may not necessarily be a registered Clinical Dietitian (see page 50). They may have some training in nutrition.

Occupational Therapist (OT)  OTs help patients manage their daily activities. During and after cancer treatment, it may be more difficult to do things that are important to you. The OT can assess your challenges and suggest possible solutions. The OT may suggest trying assistive devices or new techniques to make activities easier. The OT may also provide suggestions for dealing with pain or fatigue.

Oncologists (Oncologists)  Doctors who are specialized in treating cancer. You may see a Medical Oncologist or Hematologist (a blood disorder specialist) who decides what medications are needed to treat your cancer, or a Radiation Oncologist who is specialized in using radiation to treat cancer or a Surgical Oncologist who specializes in cancer operations. Some patients see more than one Oncologist.

Ostomy  An ostomy is an operation that creates an opening from an area inside the body to the outside.

Palliative Care  An approach to care that improves the quality of life of patients and families facing serious illness. Palliative care provides physical, emotional, and spiritual support.

People often think that palliative care is only for cancer patients who are dying. This is not so. Palliative care can be appropriate for patients at any stage of illness. Palliative care focuses on aspects of cancer treatment other than the cure; such as treating the symptoms of cancer (like pain) and the side effects of cancer treatment.

Palliative care can be provided by your Cancer Care Team, your Family Doctor/Nurse Practitioner, or in complex cases by a specialist Palliative Care Team who can support your care team.

Pathologist  A Doctor who looks at cells and tissues under a microscope to see whether or not they are normal.
**Personal Directive**  Preparing a personal directive is part of advance care planning. A personal directive allows you to say how health and personal care decisions are to be made for you if you become mentally incapable of making decisions. A personal directive also helps loved ones who will need to make the decisions. It comes into effect only if you become mentally incapable of speaking for yourself.

**Pharmacist**  Pharmacists help you with all of your medications (also called drugs), including chemotherapy. They review your prescriptions carefully so that your drugs are prepared safely and accurately. They will also give you information about how to take your medicine and what to expect during treatment.

**Physiotherapist**  Physiotherapists can help patients maintain or restore muscle strength, physical function and mobility during and after cancer treatment. The Physiotherapist may also help you manage cancer-related pain and fatigue.

**Platelets**  Cells that help you form blood clots, to stop bleeding.

**Positron Emission Tomography (PET) Scan**  An imaging technique that uses a computer to create detailed 3-dimensional colour pictures of areas inside the body. A radioisotope is injected into the body and collects in certain tissues. A scanner takes pictures of the radiation given off by the radioisotopes and creates an image of the organs and structures.

**Primary Site**  The part of the body where the cancer began. Cancer is usually named after the organ in which it first starts. For example, cancer that starts in the breast is always breast cancer, even if it spreads (metastasizes) to other organs such as bones or lungs.

**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?

To learn more about the survival rates for your type and stage of cancer visit www.cancer.ca.

**Psychiatrists**  Psychiatrists are doctors who can help you cope with the adjustments and emotional impact of cancer, and may prescribe medication to help you deal with depression and anxiety.

**Psychologists**  Psychologists can help you cope with the emotional, psychological, physical, social and practical concerns and adjustments relating to cancer. They can help you cope with the uncertainty; fears and worries that may accompany life with cancer, help you expand your coping strategies, and deal with depression and anxiety. They also provide psychotherapy.

**Psychosocial Oncology Team**  It is common for a cancer diagnosis to create distress of varying degrees for patients and their family members. The Psychosocial Oncology Team provides help with the psychological, emotional, spiritual, social, family, and symptom management issues that create significant distress for patients and their families. The team includes Social Workers, Spiritual Care Providers, Advanced Practice Nurses, Psychologists and Psychiatrists.
**Quality of Life**  Overall enjoyment of life, sense of well-being and the ability to do the things that are important to the person.

**Radiation Therapists**  Radiation Therapists deliver radiation treatment according to the plan prepared by the patient’s Radiation Oncologist. Every patient has their own unique plan. The Radiation Therapist plays an important role in educating patients about possible side effects and provides advice on how to minimize them.

**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.

**Sentinel Node Biopsy**  A surgical procedure to see if cancer has spread beyond a primary tumour. Sentinel node biopsy is used most commonly in breast cancer and melanoma. The sentinel nodes are the first few lymph nodes where a tumour drains.

**Social Workers**  Social Workers help people with cancer and their families manage and cope with the day to day challenges of living with cancer. They provide counseling, education, information, and advocacy. They can also help you connect with health care, government, and community resources.

**Speech Language Pathologists**  Speech-language Pathologists help patients manage swallowing and speech problems associated with cancer and cancer treatment.

**Spiritual Care Providers**  Spiritual Care Providers (also called 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 tradition. Cancer can upset one’s entire outlook on life. The Chaplain is here to help you regain balance and connect with your inner strength, which can make a huge difference getting you through treatment. Chaplains also help with anxiety, family coping, and can provide spiritual resources as you need.

**Standard of Care**  The level of care that anyone with a particular condition or disease should expect to receive.

**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.)

**Surgery** An operation to remove or repair a part of the body, or to see if there is disease in a part of the body.

**Systemic Therapy** Treatment with anticancer drugs that travel through the blood to cells all over the body. Includes chemotherapy, biologic therapy, immunotherapy and hormonal therapy.

**TNM Staging System** A system used to describe the extent of cancer in the body (the stage) for most types of cancer. T describes the size of the tumour. N describes the spread to lymph nodes. M describes how far the cancer has spread (metastasized) to distant sites in the body.

**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).

**Ultrasound** A diagnostic imaging method that uses high-frequency sound waves to produce pictures of structures in your body.

**Volunteers** Hospitals are fortunate to be supported by many volunteers who provide a variety of help and support to patients in the in-patient and outpatient areas.

**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.
This booklet was developed by Cancer Patients and Family Members, Cancer Care Nova Scotia, Cape Breton Cancer Centre, QEII Cancer Care Services and the Nova Scotia Cancer Patient Education Committee.


This information is to be updated every 3 years, or as new clinical evidence emerges.

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.

CCNS-0052 FEB2017