



**Saskatchewan
Cancer Agency**

Allan Blair Cancer Centre Patient Guide



GUIDE

RESEARCH

EDUCATION

TREATMENT

PREVENTION

EARLY DETECTION

Contents

Foreword	ii
How to find us	1
Parking	1
Wheelchairs	1
Volunteer Driving Program	1
Taxi service	1
Who you might see on your first visit	2
Other team members and support	3
Patient Education Centre	4
What might take place on your first visit	4
Things to bring	5
More helpful hints for your first visit	5
What happens after your first visit?	6
What will you have to pay for?	6
Medicines	6
Accommodations	7
Financial concerns	7
Hotels/transportation discounts	8
Out-of-province or out-of-Canada cancer treatment	8
Donations	8
Where to get help	9
Quality of Care Coordinator	10
Lay Advisory Committee	10

Foreword



This patient guide has been prepared for you and your family by the staff of the Allan Blair Cancer Centre. We hope the information in this guide will help you to feel more comfortable with your first appointment at the Cancer Centre. This guide explains who we are, what we do, and what services we provide.

At the Cancer Centre, we provide compassionate, timely, and quality care to all our patients. You will meet a team of experienced, skilled, and dedicated health professionals who will help you understand your diagnosis and help you make choices on your treatment and care. We want to ensure your needs are being met, so please feel free to talk openly with your cancer care team.

We hope this patient guide provides you with useful information and answers any questions that may arise during your treatment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TSGoh'.

Dr. T. S. Goh, MBBS, FRCP(C)
Executive Director, Allan Blair Cancer Centre

How to find us

(see map in your information folder)

Our address is:

4101 Dewdney Avenue

Regina, SK S4T 7T1

Tel: (306) 766-2213

(8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Mon.-Fri.)

The Cancer Centre is within the Pasqua Hospital. You can get to the Cancer Centre through the hospital's main doors. Hospital volunteers are available at the front door of the hospital to show you the way. The clinic's reception desk is located through the Cancer Centre's doors. Please check in with the receptionist upon arrival.

Parking

Parking is available in the Pasqua Hospital parkade for a fee. If you think you are going to be in the Cancer Centre for over 3 hours, bring your parking stub to the volunteer desk. They will give you a parking discount voucher to show to the parking attendant when leaving the parkade. There is also 2-hour street parking available within the neighbourhood.

Wheelchairs

If you need to borrow a wheelchair for your visit, you can sign one out from our reception desk.

Volunteer Driving Program

A volunteer driving program is available to patients who qualify. Ask to speak with the Volunteer Coordinator, or call (306) 766-2512, to see if you can use this program.

Taxi service

Telephones are available for you to call a taxi, if needed. The cost of the taxi is your responsibility.



Pasqua Hospital, from Dewdney Avenue looking towards the main entrance

Who you might see on your first visit

A cancer care team is made up of many different people, including doctors, nurses, radiation therapists, social workers, volunteers and dietitians. Here are some of the people you might meet on your first visit:

Receptionist

The first person you meet will be the receptionist. When you arrive, you must register with the receptionist before going to your appointment.



Reception area at the Allan Blair Cancer Centre

Admitting clerk

When you are done at the reception desk, you will see an admitting clerk. The admitting clerk will ask you some basic questions:

- date of birth
- address

- Saskatchewan Health Services card number
- other health insurance coverage
- person to contact and phone number
- treaty number, if applicable
- health care directive (living will)
- family doctor's name.

This is to make sure that the information we have about you is complete. You should arrive 30 minutes before your appointment to answer these questions. On later visits, please let us know if this information has changed. You should also know that we must enter this information about all cancer patients in the Cancer Registry. All the information is kept confidential.

Oncology nurse

Once finished at Admitting, you will be directed to the waiting room. An oncology nurse will meet you and take you to an examining room. Before you see the doctor, your nurse will ask you important questions about yourself, your family and what has been happening to you. He or she will help you understand the information you are given. Your nurse will also give you a phone number to call if you need help or information once you leave the Cancer Centre.

Oncologist

Next, the doctor will meet with you. When you are diagnosed with cancer, you are referred to a cancer specialist called an oncologist (on-CALL-o-jist). There are many kinds of oncologists. All of them work closely together. You may be examined by your oncologist at this time. Your oncologist will spend time explaining your cancer and deciding what treatment would be best for you.

Other team members and support

Social workers

Social workers in the Psychosocial Oncology department at the Cancer Centre help you and your family adjust to the stress caused by cancer and its treatment. Every patient is assigned a social worker. Social workers provide counselling on issues such as the effects of an illness on family relationships, financial difficulties, and home management concerns. Your social worker can also tell you about support services for you and your family.

Pharmacists

Pharmacists at the Cancer Centre will help you with your cancer medicines. They help to review and calculate all doses of cancer medicines that have been prescribed for you. Pharmacists will talk to you about your cancer medicines and give you written information which will help you understand how your medicines work, how to use and store them properly at home, and how to manage any side effects. They are available to answer any questions you may have about the medicines prescribed by your oncologist.

Palliative care professionals

These are skilled and thoughtful people who focus on aspects of treatment other than the cure itself, such as controlling pain.



Radiation therapy team at the Allan Blair Cancer Centre

Your family doctor

The Allan Blair Cancer Centre keeps your family doctor updated on your progress. The Cancer Centre sends, on a regular basis, letters to the family doctor reporting on your test results and your progress.

If you are experiencing a health concern which is not cancer related (e.g. an injury), please contact your family doctor in these instances.

Volunteers

The Allan Blair Cancer Centre is fortunate to be supported by many volunteers and groups who provide a variety of help and support to patients. They can help you find your way around the Centre or to the hospital for tests.

Patient Education Centre

A patient library is available for your use. The library contains books, lists of appropriate websites, pamphlets, brochures, videos and audiotapes for you to borrow. A volunteer will be able to assist you with finding the information you need.

As well, a computer is available for your use at the volunteer desk located beside the Patient Education Centre.



Volunteers in the patient library

What might take place on your first visit

Your first visit to the Cancer Centre may take 1-2 hours. When you meet the oncologist, he or she will examine you and discuss your symptoms. You may also have some tests such as blood, urine or X-rays. This visit is a consultation or discussion visit. You will not receive any treatment on your first visit.

We suggest you bring a friend or relative with you. It can help to have someone else there to keep you company. He or she can help you remember things you have been told or hear something you might have missed.

The Allan Blair Cancer Centre is an "outpatient" treatment centre, which means patients do not stay overnight in the Cancer Centre. However, for some treatments, you may be admitted to the Pasqua Hospital.

Things to bring

- ◆ Your cancer care team will need a list of the medicines you are taking at home. They need to know this before giving you any cancer medication. This includes Tylenol®, vitamins, dietary supplements (Boost®, Ensure®) and any herbal preparations or traditional medicines and treatments from other cultures.
- ◆ Bring your health card. If you have private health insurance, please bring that card too.
- ◆ Bring a list of things you are allergic to, including medications and foods.
- ◆ You may be asked by the Cancer Centre to bring your X-ray films from your home hospital. Be sure to pick these up a day or two before you come for your appointment.
- ◆ Write down a list of any questions you have and bring them with you. This will help you remember what you want to ask. You may want to use the question sheet provided in this package.

More helpful hints for your first visit

- ◆ Patients and visitors are asked to turn off cellular phones while in the Cancer Centre. Cellular phones can interfere with the operation of the medical equipment, and some of our equipment may damage your phone.
- ◆ Scented and perfumed products can cause allergic reactions for some people and can also add to some patients' feelings of nausea. Please do not wear scented products like perfume, aftershave, hairspray or lotions.
- ◆ The Allan Blair Cancer Centre is a non-smoking centre. You may not smoke in the building or outside the main doors.
- ◆ Bring things to help you pass the time, such as books, crosswords, or magazines.
- ◆ If you have waited more than half an hour past your appointment time, check with the receptionist, but please be patient. All staff are doing their best to stay on time, but some delays cannot be avoided.

- ◆ Try not to cancel your first visit. It is very important to attend. If you need to cancel your appointment, please call (306) 766-2213 as far ahead as possible.

What happens after your first visit?

- ◆ Your cancer doctor and nurse will give you information to take home to read and share with others.
- ◆ They will also give you a phone number to call if you have any questions after you leave the Cancer Centre.
- ◆ You may be given an appointment to come back for more discussion or for treatment. It may be possible for you to have some chemotherapy treatments at your local hospital. If so, your cancer doctor and nurse will work with your local hospital team to monitor your treatment.
- ◆ Your family doctor will be updated on a regular basis regarding your care at the Cancer Centre.
- ◆ Write down all your questions before and after your first visit and bring these to your next visit. This will help you to get your questions answered.

- ◆ You may wish to keep a journal or notebook of all your tests, procedures or treatments.

What will you have to pay for?

You will not pay for the cancer care provided at the Allan Blair Cancer Centre. It is covered by the province's health insurance. Most medicines used to treat your cancer are also provided free of charge to patients from the pharmacy at the Cancer Centre.

However, the Cancer Centre does not provide other medicines, such as antibiotics, pain relievers or anti-ulcer medicines. As well, prostheses are not paid for by the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency.

Medicines

Your cancer doctor may prescribe medicines to treat your cancer. Some medicines are given by an injection and some are taken by mouth at home. Most of these medicines are provided free of charge to patients from the pharmacy at the Cancer Centre. There may be some exceptions that your doctor or pharmacist at the Cancer Centre can explain. If you need any help with your cancer medicine, do not hesitate to ask the Cancer Centre pharmacist.

You may also need to take medicine to help with symptoms caused by your cancer or cancer treatment. Prescriptions for these medicines are not filled at the Cancer Centre but at your local pharmacy. The cost of the medicines will depend on your drug coverage through the Saskatchewan Prescription Drug Plan or other private health plans that you may have. Your local pharmacist will be able to help you with information on the cost of these medicines and your health insurance plans.

Accommodations

The Saskatchewan Cancer Agency operates a Cancer Patient Lodge which provides room and board for out-of-town patients and for companions when they are required. Reservations are required and patients are charged a small fee to



The Cancer Patient Lodge offers patients and their companions a relaxed "home away from home."

stay at the Lodge. Ask a member of your cancer care team for a brochure, which contains more information about the Lodge.

If you would like to stay at the Lodge, call (306) 359-3166 for a reservation.

Financial concerns

If you have financial concerns, please discuss them with your social worker, who will try to find help. She or he will be able to connect you with the government services or community organizations that can provide financial help.

"I didn't know that you could claim all your trips on your income tax."

Cancer survivor

It is a good idea to keep all your travel, food and accommodation receipts. You may be able to claim them on your income tax return. More information can be obtained from your accountant or from Canada Customs and Revenue Agency.

Hotels/ transportation discounts

Some hotels provide a discount for cancer patients receiving treatment. To access this, ask the receptionist for a "travel receipt".

As well, Saskatchewan Transportation Corporation (STC) offers a discount for patients who travel frequently for medical appointments. Medical passes are available from the STC office.

Out-of-province or out-of-Canada cancer treatment

In some cases a second opinion or treatment in another province may be desired or necessary. Certain procedures require prior approval from Saskatchewan Health before payment will be made, so check with your oncologist before making any arrangements.

Occasionally patients are referred out of country for treatment that is not available in Canada. Before your family physician or specialist makes any arrangements, prior approval must be obtained from Saskatchewan Health. Because Saskatchewan Health consults the

Cancer Centres before granting prior approval, the request can best be facilitated by having the Cancer Centre administration initiate the request to Saskatchewan Health on behalf of the patient and oncologist. For more details, please contact Saskatchewan Health or speak to your oncologist.

The costs of travel and accommodation are the responsibility of the patient.

Donations

Patients and their families may wish to make a charitable donation or bequest to the Allan Blair Cancer Centre, Patient Lodge, or any of the treatment, education, research, and prevention and early detection programs operated by the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. We are pleased to accept donations and issue tax receipts at the Administration Office, or you can mail your donation to:

Allan Blair Cancer Centre
4101 Dewdney Avenue
Regina, SK S4T 7T1

Where to get help

- To talk to someone from your cancer care team, call the **Allan Blair Cancer Centre** (8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Mon.-Fri.) **766-2213**
- To reach a cancer doctor outside business hours, **in case of emergency**, call the **Pasqua Hospital** **766-2222**

There are different cancer doctors on call, so you will need to tell the switchboard operator if you are a **chemotherapy, radiation, or stem cell transplant patient.*

- If you need a place to stay in Regina, call the **Cancer Patient Lodge** **359-3166**
- For more information about your cancer and about support services, call your local **Canadian Cancer Society** office **790-5822** (in Regina)
- To speak to someone about cancer, call the **Canadian Cancer Information Services** **1-888-939-3333** (toll-free)
- To speak to a nurse about general health concerns, call the **Saskatchewan HealthLine** **1-877-800-0002** (toll-free)
- To speak to someone who has had cancer, call the **CancerConnection** **1-800-236-6750** (toll-free)
- Other numbers to remember:

Quality of Care Coordinator

We understand that at times, despite our best efforts, situations occur which cause concern. If you have questions or issues regarding the service you received, please speak to the member of your health care team who can best help with your concern. If you are not able to resolve your issue, our Quality of Care Coordinator may be able to help you.

Quality of Care Coordinator:
(306) 933-0717
(collect calls accepted)

Lay Advisory Committee

The Lay Advisory Committee is a group composed of community volunteers who assist the Allan Blair Cancer Centre in identifying and addressing the concerns and needs of cancer patients and their families.

Contact the Lay Advisory Committee at (306) 766-2203.

This booklet is meant to support the information that your cancer care team gives you. It does not replace any information that your cancer care team gives you. This booklet and the accompanying booklet "Cancer Care and its Treatment" were developed by the Patient Guide Teams and staff at the Allan Blair Cancer Centre (Regina) and the Saskatoon Cancer Centre. Development included input from the Patient Orientation and Information Task Force at the QEII Health Sciences Centre in Halifax and Cancer Care Nova Scotia. The booklet template was used with permission from the Living Well with Cancer (LWWC) Program.

The Saskatchewan Cancer Agency would like to thank our patients and their families for participating in the evaluation of the guides.





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