



Saskatchewan
Cancer Agency

Cancer Care and its Treatment



CARE & TREATMENT

RESEARCH

EDUCATION

TREATMENT

PREVENTION

EARLY DETECTION

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Note

Words written in *green* are defined in the Understanding Medical Words section (pages 16-19) of this guide.

Foreword



The diagnosis of cancer is a life-changing experience for patients and their families, one that generates feelings of fear, anxiety and uncertainty.

It is the responsibility of the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency to ensure that Saskatchewan residents, once diagnosed with cancer, receive the best possible treatment and follow-up care. We strive to make certain that our patients have access to the latest, most advanced treatment options. A dedicated team of highly trained, skilled and knowledgeable health professionals helps patients and families cope with the physical and emotional impact of dealing with this disease.

The care and comfort of patients is our foremost objective. We also want to ensure that our patients have a complete understanding of their diagnosis and the treatment options available. As the patient, you have an important role in the health care team. I encourage you to ask questions so you have the information necessary to make informed decisions regarding treatment and follow-up care.

In addition to cancer treatment, the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency also provides cancer prevention, early detection, research and education throughout our province.

This booklet is designed to help you become familiar with the programs and services available. I hope it will assist you in your cancer journey. Your comments are most welcome.

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

Bob Allen,
Chief Executive Officer
Saskatchewan Cancer Agency

Introduction

When you first learn you have cancer, your feelings can overwhelm you. Sadness, fear, anger, denial and helplessness are all normal reactions.

We want to help you and your family cope with this situation. We want to provide information that will give you more control over the way you deal with this disease.

This guide was produced with the help of people who had cancer. They felt they would have been better prepared to cope with cancer if they had more understanding of the disease and its treatments.

They also said we should provide practical information about the cancer centres to people with cancer and their families—a guide to help you understand where things are, and how you can get answers to your questions.

That is what we try to do in this guide. Yet, we cannot answer all your questions. The details about your cancer and your treatments will come from your doctors and other members of the cancer care team.

You are the most important member of the cancer care team. Your comments and feelings are important to your cancer care team, so please express them. They will do their best to answer any questions you may have. Their goal is to support you in every way they can.

What is cancer?

Cancer is not a single disease. In fact, cancer is a family of more than 100 different diseases. These different kinds of cancer are usually named according to the part of the body where they first develop.

Cancer develops when certain cells in your body begin to grow out of control. These abnormal cells sometimes form a mass or lump called a tumour. But not all tumours are cancer.

Benign (be-NINE) tumours do not spread to other parts of the body and are not cancer.

Malignant (ma-LIG-nant) tumours are cancer and can spread to other parts of the body.

Cancer spreads when cells break away from the tumour and travel to other parts of your body.

In some types of cancer, such as leukemia, these cells start to grow in many places at the same time.

When cancer cells spread, it is called *metastasis* (me-TA-sta-sis). It happens through the blood system or through the lymphatic system.

Wherever cancer cells grow and spread, they can prevent healthy cells and organs from doing their job. As a result your body cannot work like it should, and you get sick.

How do people get cancer?

The exact cause of most cancers is unknown. Cancer has many different causes. It may be caused by exposure to tobacco smoke or other poisons, ultraviolet rays from sunlight and the things we eat.

Cancer can affect people who look after themselves and otherwise are very healthy. A person's ethnic origin can also be a factor in getting some types of cancer. Cancer may run in families because we pass on risks for different types of cancer through our genes. However, you cannot catch cancer from someone else. It is not contagious.

Over the past few decades, governments and companies have spent billions of dollars on research into cancer and its treatment. A lot of progress has been made in understanding cancer better. Many advances have been made in the way we treat people with cancer.

But cancer is still a common disease, and there is no magic cure. In fact, as we succeed in preventing other diseases, and as people live longer, cancer has become more common. One out of every three people can expect to have some type of cancer during their lifetime.

Everyone is different. Some people deal with cancer with very little information about the disease. Other people feel prepared to cope with cancer if they understand the disease better.

How do we tell if you have cancer?

To find out if you have cancer the doctor may need to do a *biopsy* (BY-op-see). This involves taking a small sample of cells and looking at them under a microscope and doing tests.

The biopsy tells you and your doctor if you have cancer. If you do have cancer, the biopsy tells what type of cancer you have. This helps your cancer care team recommend the best treatment for you.

For most types of cancer, the doctor will also want further tests to find out the **stage** of your cancer.

The stage of a cancer depends on its size and the extent to which it has spread to other parts of the body. Sometimes the stage of cancer is described as a number—Stage 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4. The higher numbers are used for cancers that have spread. Different types of cancers have their own staging or classification system. One such classification system is the TNM System. Ask your oncologist what your stage of cancer is and what it means to you.

Staging involves doing exams and tests to learn more about the cancer in your body. These tests will show the size of a tumour, and if your cancer has spread to nearby lymph nodes or to other parts of the body.

The types of tests you might have will depend on the medical guidelines for your specific type of cancer.

Types of tests

- Biopsies
- Bone scans
- CT Scans
- MRIs
- Ultrasound
- Blood tests
- Chest X-rays
- Mammogram
- Surgery

Staging also gives your cancer care team the information they need to offer you choices about your treatment.

Types of cancer

1. *Carcinomas* (car-sin-NO-ma) are the most common types of cancer. They start in an organ such as a lung, breast, prostate, bowel, or ovary.
2. *Sarcomas* (sar-KO-ma) are cancers that start in the muscles, bones and tissues that connect different parts of the body.
3. *Leukemias* (lu-KEY-mee-ya), or blood cancers, are cancers of the white blood cells.
4. *Lymphomas* (lim-FO-ma) are cancers of the lymphatic system, 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.

Who is here for you?

Your cancer care team

The first thing you should know is that your cancer care team is in place to help you and those around you who are providing support. Helping people is a big part of everyone's job.

You might have a question you do not want to ask because you think it might bother someone, or because you think you should already know the answer. Ask it anyway.

Your first visit to a cancer centre can be confusing, even frightening. The people who work there want to help you be as comfortable as possible. Answering your questions is important to them.

If you want to tell someone how you are feeling about what you are going through, please do. It is normal for you to have a wide range of different feelings. People are not too busy to listen.

The second thing you should know is that your cancer care team wants you to take part in decisions about

your treatment. They will give you all the information you need to help you understand your choices. You can say when you have had enough information or if you want more.

The members of your cancer care team will also give you their best advice. The decisions will always be yours to make with help from your team of caregivers.

Your cancer care team is made up of several health care professionals, including your cancer doctor, your family doctor, cancer nurse, social worker, dietitian, pharmacist, radiation therapist, pastoral care worker, and others.

"The oncologist answered any questions... he had all kinds of time for me." Cancer survivor

It is common to see more than one cancer doctor. Each cancer doctor has an area in which he or she is an expert. You may be asked to see a new doctor because he or she has a special understanding of your type of cancer and of the treatment you need.

Some members of your cancer care team

Family doctor

Your family doctor works with the cancer team before, during and after your cancer treatments to care for you.

Cancer doctors (Oncologists)

These doctors have special training in treating cancer. You might see a *medical oncologist* (on-CALL-o-jist) or *hematologist* (hee-ma-TALL-o-jist) (blood specialist) who decides what medications are needed to treat your cancer; a *radiation oncologist* who has special training in using radiation to treat cancer; or a *pediatric oncologist* (pee-dee-AT-ric) who specializes in treating children with cancer.

Cancer nurses

Cancer nurses are trained to support and care for you and your family. They help you understand your cancer and its treatment. They may also explain treatment options, give you the treatment, and help you deal with any side effects.

Radiation therapists

Radiation therapists are educated specifically in the field of radiation therapy. They plan the treatment of

this cancer therapy and deliver the radiation according to each patient's treatment plan. The radiation therapist plays an important role in educating patients on the possible side effects from the radiation and provides advice on how to minimize them. Because a course of radiation therapy often takes several weeks, a special relationship usually develops between the therapists, patient and family members.

Pharmacists

The Cancer Centre pharmacists are trained to help you with your cancer medicines. They review your cancer prescriptions carefully so that your medicine can be prepared and dispensed safely and accurately. They will also give you information on how to take your medicine and what to expect.

Social workers

Social workers are trained to support, counsel and help people and their families deal with cancer and the impact it may have on their lives.

Dietitians

These health care professionals are trained to give you advice about food and nutrition.

Working With Your Cancer Care Team

If you do not know the role of the person you are speaking with, just ask. You have the right to know.

After looking at all the information, your cancer team will discuss possible treatments with you, and together you will decide on the right treatment. This is called **shared decision making** and it makes for better health care.

You may also want to have your family members or friends help you make these decisions.

You will be asked to sign consent forms before any kind of treatment begins. Your cancer care team will explain the treatment to you before you are asked to sign.

They will tell you about how effective your treatment should be. They will talk about the likely result or outcome of your treatment. They will also explain the side effects of any treatment.

If you do not understand something your cancer care team tells you, ask them to explain it again. You should know what to expect from your treatment before you agree to it. This is called **informed consent**. You give consent to treatment only when it has been explained to you and you fully understand it.

Cancer treatments

The type of treatment you need will depend on the type of cancer you have and the stage of your cancer. The goal of the treatment may be to remove or shrink the tumour, destroy cancer cells that may have spread, reduce the chance that the cancer will come back or help you deal with symptoms caused by certain cancers.

There are several different types of cancer treatments. They include:

- surgery
- radiation therapy
- stem cell transplants
- cancer medicines.

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

Since it can be stressful and confusing to take in a lot of new information about your particular treatment, it may be helpful to have a family member or friend with you during such talks. He or she can take notes or just listen to discussions with members of the cancer care team.

Basic information about each of the main types of treatment

Surgery means having an operation to change or remove body tissue or organs. For certain types of cancer, surgery is the best treatment. The type of surgery depends on the type of cancer you have and where it is in your body. An operation may be done to:

- ◆ find out what type of cancer you have (a biopsy).
- ◆ see if the cancer has spread.
- ◆ remove the cancer.
- ◆ get rid of the symptoms of cancer, such as pain.

Radiation therapy is a cancer treatment that uses ionizing or high-energy radiation. Radiation can be given both externally (delivered from outside the body) or internally (taken orally or injected into the body). External radiation uses high penetrating X-rays produced by a special treatment machine. This treatment is planned very specifically to treat only the area of the body with cancer cells or where they were removed. These specific beams will only damage and destroy cells in this area. The rest of the body will not be affected.

A *stem cell transplant* is often used to treat some types of cancers (e.g. leukemia, lymphoma). There are two types of stem cell transplants. One involves very intense chemotherapy followed by a transplant of your own previously collected *stem cells* (autologous transplant). The second type (allogeneic transplant) involves chemotherapy to get rid of diseased bone marrow and replacing it with healthy stem cells taken from another person.

Cancer medicines

All cancer medicines travel through your bloodstream and are carried throughout your body to the cancer cells. There are many different types of cancer medicines. Some of the most common are:

- chemotherapy
- hormone therapy
- immunotherapy.

Chemotherapy (key-mo-THER-a-pee) uses medications to destroy cancer cells or stop them from growing. Many kinds of medications can be used in chemotherapy. Your treatment may involve using one medication or a combination of different medications.

Hormone therapy can be used to fight certain types of cancer (e.g. breast cancer, prostate cancer) which depend on hormones to grow.

Hormones are proteins that are produced normally by our bodies. They guide and control many functions of the body such as our growth and digestion.

Immunotherapy sometimes uses your own body's immune system to fight cancer cells by boosting your body's built-in natural defence system. Another type of immunotherapy involves giving antibodies that act against the cancer cells (antibody therapy).

Combination of treatments

You may receive just one of the above treatments or a combination of more than one type of treatment. Surgery, for example, may be followed by chemotherapy and/or radiation therapy. Your doctor will give you more details about different treatments.

Symptoms and side effects

Cancer and treatment can sometimes cause discomfort, tiredness and other side effects. Some people do not have side effects; others have a few or many.

The good news is that there are many ways to manage symptoms and side effects. It is also important to remember that many of these side effects will go away.

During treatment, you will receive the support you need to resume your normal routine as soon as possible. In some cases, specialized doctors and nursing staff from the palliative care team will offer help with symptom control, support therapy and counselling.

People often think that palliative care is only for cancer patients who are dying. This is not so. Palliative care professionals are skilled and thoughtful people who focus on aspects of treatment other than the cure itself, such as controlling pain. Their role is to provide the best possible care to ensure the fullest range of activities during and after cancer treatment.

Getting more information

Learning more about cancer and its treatment helps many people feel more in control. Getting information can help you make better decisions with your cancer care team. Having good information may also help you worry less.

"I think patients should have a sheet of questions given to them to make sure they ask those questions, because some people do not know the questions they should ask."
Cancer survivor

You can ask your doctor, nurse or other members of your cancer care team questions about your cancer and its treatment. They are there to answer your questions and to help you.

When you talk to your cancer care team, remember that it is normal to feel overwhelmed by the amount of new information you are given. If you don't understand something, please ask. It is also a good idea to make notes so that you can refresh your memory later about answers to questions.

"Get the information on paper so when you are ready to sit down and read it, you can read it."
Cancer survivor

You will be given written information about your cancer and treatment options after your cancer care team has explained things to you. You can take this home and share it with your family.

If you are a relative or friend of someone with cancer, learn as much as you can. Information will help you provide support and may also help you worry less.

Other resources that will provide you with information

Canadian Cancer Society

The Canadian Cancer Society can connect you with a range of support provided by individuals and groups who have gone through the cancer experience. The Society also operates a Cancer Information Service. This is a toll-free telephone number where you can speak to a cancer information specialist who can answer your questions and send you more information about cancer. The phone number is 1-888-939-3333.

Support Services

Cancer affects many people. As a result, most communities have support services and volunteers to help. These support services might focus on certain kinds of cancer or they may focus on certain aspects of living with cancer or its treatment. They sometimes host workshops on certain topics. Other volunteers help out by just listening to you. You can find out more about cancer support services and volunteer services from your cancer care team, or cancer centre, or by contacting the local branch of the Canadian Cancer Society.

Living Well With Cancer

Living Well With Cancer (LWWC) is a unique partnership among people with cancer, health care professionals, and people representing cancer and professional organizations, and an industry partner. LWWC has produced easy-to-read information and tools to help you cope with cancer.

Ask your health care team for LWWC materials, including an information kit and a personal health journal in which you can record details about your treatment, and how you are responding to treatment, as well as the names and phone numbers of your cancer care team.

The Internet

You can find a lot of information about cancer on the Internet. Please remember that not everything you read about cancer will apply to you. Remember, information on the Internet is not always reliable.

When you use the Internet, you may find it helpful to ask yourself some questions such as:

- ◆ Is it clear who is responsible for the accuracy of this information?
- ◆ Is it clear who is paying for this information to be posted here?

If you have questions about information you saw on the Internet, ask your cancer care team.

On a practical note, it would be difficult for your team to review or comment on large amounts of material you might find on the Internet. Instead try to focus on questions that relate to you. If you feel you need more time to deal with many questions, you may want to arrange a special visit to discuss your concerns.

Some Internet sites that provide general health information and information about cancer

The Canadian Cancer Society
www.cancer.ca

Canadian Health Network
www.canadian-health-network.ca

Health Canada
www.hc-sc.gc.ca

National Cancer Institute
www.nci.nih.gov

People Living with Cancer
www.plwc.org

Waiting and uncertainty

One of the hardest things about getting cancer or any disease is the uncertainty—and the time you spend waiting to find out more.

Soon after cancer is diagnosed, many people want to know exactly what they are up against. What is the outlook? Could they die?

You need to discuss these questions with your doctor. Getting answers may take time, and there may be no simple answers. The experience of each person with cancer is different. It is true that some cancers do require immediate treatment. But many other cancers grow slowly, and treatment delays of weeks or even months may have little or no effect on your cancer or outcome.

The important thing is that you are getting the right treatment in a timely manner. If you do not feel that this is happening, you should look for answers to your questions. If you are not satisfied by the answers you are getting, then you have the right to express your concern.

Your family doctor

As you deal with cancer and your treatment, it is very important to stay in close touch with your family doctor. We send your doctor updates on your progress after every visit. Your family doctor knows you and your health history and can be a key source of help and advice. It's a good idea to make regular appointments with him or her during and after your treatment.

Talking about your cancer

Cancer affects the human spirit as much as it affects the body. It challenges your values, beliefs and goals. Remember that you are not alone. Your cancer care team can help you with your feelings and emotions. This type of support is an important part of treating your cancer.

"My husband came in once and watched what they did, and the therapist explained how the machine worked. I think that was good for him because now I was not going into some unknown room and getting some unknown treatment. He could picture what was happening." Cancer survivor

Telling people you have cancer and explaining your treatment can be difficult. You need to decide who you want to tell.

Suggestions to help you talk about your cancer

- ◆ Make the first move by telling people. Others may be unsure or afraid to ask you questions.
- ◆ Speak at a level they understand, especially when talking with children.
- ◆ Let your family members and friends know what to expect during your treatment. Let them know what you expect from them.
- ◆ If others want to help you, tell them how they can help.
- ◆ Be prepared for difficult questions.
- ◆ Encourage your family members to speak to a member of your cancer care team about their questions or concerns.

Talking with your children

You may want to let your children know what is happening to you as soon as possible. Do not be afraid to use the word cancer. Many of us worry we will frighten our children with this information. Your cancer care team can help you explain your cancer and treatment to your children.

Taking care of yourself

This is a time to take care of you first

- ◆ Eat as well as you can. Try to follow the Canada Food Guide and eat balanced, healthy meals. Talk to a dietitian if you need a special diet, such as low fibre meals. If you smoke, try to stop. Limit caffeine and alcohol use.
- ◆ Try to exercise. It can make you stronger and feel less tired. It can also help you relax and keep your mind clear.
- ◆ Stay involved in regular activities and continue to do things you are comfortable with and enjoy doing.
- ◆ The stress you feel is real and anything you can do to keep your body and mind strong will help you cope with your cancer and your treatments.
- ◆ Focus on what you can do rather than what you cannot do.
- ◆ Ask others for help. This may be difficult at first, but it can strengthen a relationship. This can also give you more time and energy to enjoy other areas of your life.
- ◆ Read about how others have coped. This can help you realize that you are not alone and can help you cope.
- ◆ Turn to family, friends and your cancer care team when you are feeling down or need to talk.
- ◆ Get in touch with the spiritual side of life, if appropriate for you.
- ◆ Meditation, massage or other relaxation techniques may help you cope with stress.
- ◆ Join a support group to help you cope.

Complementary therapies

Many people with cancer use complementary therapies to help them deal with the effects of the disease and treatment. Examples of complementary therapies are:

- acupuncture/acupressure
- aromatherapy
- therapeutic touch
- massage therapy
- music therapy
- relaxation/imagery
- meditation.

It is up to you whether or not you choose to use these therapies. It is important to keep your health care team up to date about any complementary therapies you are using.

Alternative therapies

Alternative therapies are different than conventional medicines. Conventional medicines have been tested scientifically to show what benefit they have in the treatment of disease. Alternative therapies have not been tested in the same way. Your family or cancer doctor prescribes conventional medicine.

Alternative therapies might include herbal remedies (e.g. St. John's Wort, shark cartilage, Essiac Tea, ginseng), high-dose vitamin and mineral supplementation, natural products (e.g. homeopathic preparations), and traditional medicines for other cultures (e.g. Chinese or Aboriginal medicines). Not enough research has been done to show whether these therapies are effective. Some can be harmful.

It is very important to keep your doctor informed about any alternative therapies or treatments you intend to use. That way you can both watch for side effects or for problems that might result from mixing medicines and alternative therapies.

What is a clinical trial?

Researchers are always working on finding better ways to treat patients. They depend on clinical trials to find new or better ways of treating the disease, and to give people with cancer more choices for their treatment.

Clinical trials test new treatments in people with cancer. They are set up carefully and the results are carefully measured.

You may want to ask your cancer care team if you can participate in clinical trials, or your cancer care team may ask you. Be sure to ask any questions you have before deciding whether to take part. It is okay to say no if you do not want to be part of a clinical trial. **You can also withdraw from the clinical trial at any time.** Your cancer care team will still offer you the best cancer treatment available.

Other studies or research

You may be asked to participate in other research studies looking for ways people manage cancer and its treatments. It is okay to say no if you are asked to take part in one of these studies. This will not affect what cancer treatment is given to you.

What happens after your cancer treatments have finished?

When your cancer treatments have finished, you may not have to travel to the treatment centre for follow-up care.

Depending on the diagnosis and the type of treatment, follow-up care will be arranged with your family doctor or your oncologist.

Community health professionals such as nurses, social workers or dietitians may also be notified that your treatment is finished. Some of these professionals can provide ongoing support for you.

Better outlook for people with cancer

Great progress has been made in the treatment of cancer in recent years. New statistics show that people with cancer are living longer and more are remaining cancer-free.

People with cancer are also experiencing a better quality of life while they are having treatment. There is every reason to hope that we will make more progress in the treatment of cancer in the years ahead.

Understanding medical words

Benign

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

Biopsy

A short operation to remove a small piece of tissue, which is then sent to a lab to see if it contains cancer cells.

Bone marrow

The soft part at the centre of your major bones. It creates red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets.

Bone scan

A procedure done in the hospital that involves injecting radioactive dye into the blood stream in order to improve the clearness of the pictures of your bones.

CBC

Complete Blood Count. A set of tests that counts red blood cells (including hemoglobin), white blood cells, and platelets.

Cancer

A general term for more than 100 diseases. Cancer is when abnormal cells grow out of control in your body's organs, tissues or blood.

Cancer care team

A group of health care professionals who treat and support people with cancer. The team includes your doctor, nurse, dietitian, pharmacist, radiation therapist, social worker, and others.

Carcinoma

The most common type of cancer. They usually start in organs such as a lung, breast, prostate, bowel, or ovary.

CT (Computerized Tomography) Scan

This procedure views the inside of the body in detail using a series of X-rays.

Chemotherapy

The cancer treatment that uses drugs to destroy cancer cells or stop them from growing.

Combination therapy

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

Cure

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

Diagnosis

When your doctor finds out what your health problem is. Doctors will diagnose a disease by listening to what signs and symptoms you have, doing a physical check-up, and sometimes doing tests to provide more details.

Hematologist

A doctor who has special training in treating blood diseases, such as leukemia.

Hemoglobin

The protein found in red blood cells, which carries oxygen from your lungs to the rest of your body.

Hormone therapy

A cancer treatment that uses hormones (given as drugs) to treat some kinds of cancer.

Hormones

Proteins produced by your body, which move around in your blood. Hormones control how you grow, how you burn up the food you eat, and how you reproduce.

Immunotherapy

A cancer treatment that uses your body's immune system to fight cancer cells.

Leukemias

Cancers of the white blood cells.

Lymphomas

Cancers of the lymphatic system (a series of vessels that carry lymph to different parts of the body).

Lymph

A watery fluid that contains cells that fight infection and disease.

Malignant

Cancerous - with cancer.

Medical oncologist

A doctor who diagnoses and treats people with cancer, mainly using chemotherapy (drugs), or hormone therapy.

Metastasis

The spread of cancer from one part of the body to another through the bloodstream or lymph system.

MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging)

An MRI provides a detailed view of the inside of the body without the use of radiation. MRI uses a large magnet and radio waves to give a clear picture of the body's organs and tissues.

Oncologist

A doctor who has special training in treating cancer.

Oncology nurse

A nurse who is trained to support you and your family and help you understand your cancer and treatment. The nurse may give you your treatments and can help you cope with any side effects or other problems.

Pediatric oncologist

A doctor who has special training in treating children with cancer.

Platelets

Cells that stick together to stop bleeding.

Prognosis

The likely outcome of a disease. Your prognosis provides answers to questions like: Will I be able to live a normal life? Will I be cured? Will I die?

Radiation oncologist

A doctor who has special training in treating people with cancer using radiation therapy.

Radiation therapist

A therapist who can plan and administer radiation treatment.

Radiation therapy

The use of carefully prescribed doses of radiation to cure or control cancer.

Red blood cells

Blood cells that contain hemoglobin, which carries oxygen from your lungs to the rest of your body.

Remission

When the signs and symptoms of cancer disappear, and no more active cancer cells can be found.

Sarcomas

Cancers that start in the muscles, bones and tissues that connect different parts of the body.

Stem cells

Cells that develop into different types of blood cells such as white blood cells, red blood cells, and platelets.

Stem cell transplant

A type of cancer treatment. It involves chemotherapy followed by infusion of stem cells to regenerate the blood cells.

Surgery

An operation.

Treatment protocol

A set of instructions that gives all the details about how you will get cancer treatments.

Tumour

A lump or group of cells. A tumour can be either benign (without cancer) or malignant (with cancer).

White blood cells

The body's defence system. White blood cells fight infection by catching and killing germs (bacteria) that get into blood.

X-rays

This is the common term used when an image of a part of the body is transferred onto radiographic film.

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 Patient Guide 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.

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