



Concerns or questions with treatment options, medication, or plan of care

Online version at: cancer-help.me/treatment

Understanding Your Treatment

There are many types of cancer treatment. The types of treatment that you receive will depend on the type of cancer you have and the stage (the amount of cancer and where it is in the body).

Some people with cancer will have only one treatment. But most people have a combination of treatments, such as surgery with chemotherapy and/or radiation therapy. When you need treatment for cancer, you have a lot to learn and think about. It is normal to feel overwhelmed and confused. But, talking with your doctor and learning about the types of treatment you may have can help you feel more in control.

It is most important that you understand basic information of what to expect the treatment will do and how that might affect your outlook (or prognosis) as well as how it might the quality of your life so you can make informed decisions. Also your values and priorities for your care can change and evolve over time, and it is important for you to feel free to discuss this at any time with your care team.

Help with understanding

Surgery - is a procedure in which a surgeon removes cancer from your body.

Radiation Therapy - uses high doses of radiation, high-energy waves to kill cancer cells and shrink tumors.

Chemotherapy - uses drugs to kill cancer cells.

Immunotherapy - helps your immune system fight cancer.

Targeted Therapy - targets the changes in cancer cells that help them grow, divide, and spread.

Hormone Therapy –chemicals that are produced in one part of the body and affect another part of the body. Some cancers use hormones to grow and other hormones may be needed to slow or stop the growth of the cancer.

Stem Cell Transplant - are procedures that restore blood-forming stem cells in cancer patients who have had theirs destroyed by very high doses of chemotherapy or radiation therapy.

Precision Medicine - helps doctors select treatments that are most likely to help patients based on understanding the changes in the person’s genes (building blocks of what makes cells).

Ask your care team how each of the recommended treatments work against the cancer. You should also ask what to expect before, during, and after the treatment and what side effects may occur.

Information online

Additional information can be found online. See below for respected, trustworthy resources. Learning about your specific treatment will help you make informed treatment decisions.

In general, treatments for cancer are recommended by the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN), an alliance of the world’s leading cancer centers. The core resources made available by NCCN are the NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology (NCCN Guidelines®). These guidelines are the recognized standard for clinical policy in oncology and are the most comprehensive and most frequently updated clinical practice guidelines available in any area of medicine.

Content adapted from websites below.

Resources for Additional Information:

- [NCCN, Guidelines for Patients, Cancer Treatment](#)
- [NCCN, Patient and Caregiver Resources, Clinical Trials](#)
- [NIH, Understanding Cancer](#)
- [NIH, Types of Cancer Treatment](#)
- [Cancer.Net, How Cancer is Treated](#)
- [American Cancer Society, Treatment Types](#)
- [American Cancer Society, 24/7 questions about cancer or need help finding resources, 800-227-2345](#)

Recursos en Español:

- [NIH, Instituto Nacional Del Cáncer, Tratamiento del cáncer](#)
- [NIH, Instituto Nacional Del Cáncer, Preguntas para el doctor acerca del tratamiento](#)
- [Chemocare, ¿Por cuánto tiempo se administra la quimioterapia?](#)