

Understanding Your Treatment

There are many types of cancer treatments. The types of treatment that you receive will depend on the specific 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. 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 outcome (or prognosis) as well as how it might affect your quality of your life. Being informed will help you make decisions. What matters to you, your values and priorities can change and evolve over time; it is important for you to feel free to discuss this at any time with your care team.

Content adapted from websites below.

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 during treatment, how long they may last and what late or long-term side effects may be possible.

Information Online

Additional information may be provided by your cancer care team and can be found online. See below for credible, respected, trustworthy resources. Learning about your specific treatment will help you make informed decisions regarding what matters to you.

Resources for Additional Information:

- [NCCN, Guidelines for Patients, Cancer Treatment](#)
- [NIH, Types of Cancer Treatment](#)
- [NIH, Questions to Ask Your Doctor about Treatment](#)
- [Cancer.Net, How Cancer is Treated](#)
- [Chemocare, What is Chemotherapy](#)
- [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?](#)
- [Chemocare, Fundamentos de la quimioterapia](#)
- [Cancer.Net, Cómo se trata el cáncer](#)