

Welcome to the Cancer Care Clinic

Introduction

Patients and families have told our team that a cancer diagnosis can be overwhelming. We hope this booklet provides you with some information of what you can expect as you begin your treatment.

In addition to this booklet, we will provide you with other resources that have been put together by our partner cancer centres and home care services to help support you throughout your cancer journey.



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Welcome to Humber River Hospital's Cancer Care Clinic

We offer treatment, follow-up and supportive cancer care to you and your family, including:

- Specialized care from all professions
- Links to Regional Radiation Centres
- Education about your cancer diagnosis, treatment and survivorship
- Nursing care to give cancer medicine, treatments, and supportive care treatments
- Access to research by taking part in clinical trials
- Links to Home & Community Care.

We care about you and the treatment that you receive. To make sure the care meets your expectations, it is very important that you take an active role in your care.

This booklet describes what you can expect at the clinic and the team members involved in your care. We want to help you pinpoint any concerns and direct your questions to the right person on the team.

When is the clinic open?

Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., except for Statutory Holidays.

Where is the clinic located?

The clinic is located on Level 1 - Portal A of Humber River Hospital.

How do I contact the clinic?

Tel: (416) 242-1000 ext. 21500

If you have questions or concerns about your condition and want to speak to a nurse, let the clerical support associate know. If the nurse is available, they will speak with you right away, otherwise they will call you back as soon as they are able to do so.

What do I need to know about my appointments?

We will give you appointments for lab tests, treatment and doctor's exams. It is very important that you **keep your scheduled appointments**. We space your treatments out based on your treatment plan and **you should not change them unless you are sick**. The changes you make may have a bearing on your overall treatment schedule. Unlike other medical appointments, cancer treatments will often affect your activities and your ability to work or care for other members of your family.

If you must change an appointment or need to discuss a scheduling change, please call **(416) 242-1000, ext. 21500** to speak to a clerical support associate. If no one is available to speak with you, please leave your name, phone number, and a brief description of the problem on the answering machine. Remember to speak clearly and slowly. Someone will call you back during regular business hours. Please note that the doctors and the nurses do not have access to the complete schedule.

When you come to your appointment, please arrive no more than 15 minutes before your scheduled time and register at the reception desk.

To ensure the safety of all patients and staff:

- Only patients with a physical or cognitive impairment will be allowed to have someone with them during their doctor's exams. This **essential visitor** can be a family member, friend, paid private caregiver, or someone else the patient has chosen.
- **All other patients** may have one support person accompany them to the hospital, however, your support person will **not** be allowed to stay in the Cancer Care Clinic. If you wish, the doctor, nurse and other care team members can provide them with updated information by phone.





How can we work together to keep you safe?

1 Make sure we know you are the right person before we give you your treatment

- We will give you an armband every time you come to the clinic. This helps every team member to know who you are.
- Before we start any tests or procedures, or give you your treatment, we will ask your name and check your hospital number, called the “H number”. This number is unique to you.

2 Prevent falls

- Use your walker, cane or wheelchair, and wear non-slip footwear at the clinic.
- Let your nurse or doctor know if you have been unsteady on your legs, have increased weakness or drowsiness, or have fallen in the past 6 months.
- If you are at risk for falls, we will give you a yellow armband as a way to tell the team that you may need additional assistance.

3 Clean your hands

Cleaning your hands can protect you from infections and help stop germs from spreading.

- Clean your hands when entering or leaving the clinic. There are hand sanitizers available along the hallways.
- Wash your hands after using the bathroom or if you help someone use the bathroom.
- Remind visitors in your home to also wash their hands and avoid visiting you if they are not feeling well.

4 Bring your medicines from home

- Bring your medicines, or an updated list of your medicines, with you each time you come to the clinic.
- Tell your nurse if there have been changes to the medicines you take at home.

5 Wear a mask

- Upon entry to the hospital, we will give you a surgical mask to wear. Please keep this mask on at all times while in the hospital.

6 Your clinic visits for treatment

For your safety, we have a 2-day model for clinic visits.

- On day 1, the nurse and doctor will assess you and may draw blood.
- Your treatment is then scheduled on a different day so that our pharmacists can double check your blood work results and make sure your treatment dose is correct.

7 Electronic systems for your safety

We use a digital system to integrate different areas of your care into one location. Some systems work together to keep you safe are:

- Systems that monitor your vital signs
- Pharmacy equipment that prepares your treatment (Robotic Intravenous Automation known as RIVA)
- A communication system that shares your information with other members of your care team
- Intravenous (IV) pumps that have special safety features.

What can I expect at my clinic visit?

WHAT TO BRING TO EACH CLINIC VISIT

- Health card
- Photo identification (for example, a driver's license or credit card)
- All medicines you are taking at home including over-the-counter medicines, herbal medicines, vitamins and supplements. These should be in their original containers
- Name and phone number of your family doctor
- Name and phone number of your pharmacy
- A family member
- Your email address

Please update your personal contact information as needed. You can register for MY Humber Health with your email to access test results and receive automated appointment reminders.

BLOOD TESTS

Before your scheduled doctor's appointment, you may need to have your blood drawn.

- If you do not have a venous access device (for example, Port-a-Cath or PICC line), all your blood work is done at the Ambulatory Clinic Laboratory. Bring your appointment letter and health card to the Ambulatory Clinic Laboratory, located in the main corridor on the main level (Level 1, across from the Gift Shop).
- If you do have a venous access device, your nurse will provide you with more information about your device needs.

WAITING TIMES

Although we give you specific times to arrive for blood tests, exams and treatments, unfortunately you will often still have to wait. Cancer treatments depend on your blood work results, which can take up to two hours to come back from the lab. We will often make a separate appointment for your doctor to assess you and give you your treatment.

For your comfort and to help pass the time, feel free to bring a book to read, crossword puzzles, knitting or your laptop computer/tablet. We allow cell phones in the waiting room.

We do understand how frustrating and tiring it can be to wait to see the doctor or to get in for your treatment. We take this very seriously. We will try to get you in to see the doctor as quickly as possible.

YOUR TREATMENTS

Before you start treatment, we will give you information about the type of treatment you will be receiving, your treatment plan, medicines involved, potential side effects, and any tests and procedures you need. We will also book an orientation session for you with the oncology team.

Each person responds differently to treatment. We will regularly check for specific symptoms, such as nausea and fatigue. It is very important that you let us know how you are feeling. An After Hours Symptom Management telephone service is also available. Ask your nurse for more information about this service.

Unfortunately, due to space and safety issues, your designated visitor will not be able to stay with you during your treatment. The nurse will phone your designated visitor when your treatment appointment is completed.

YOUR TREATMENTS (CONTINUED)

If you need radiation therapy, your doctor will refer you to a cancer centre that is close to your home for evaluation of radiation therapy. You will meet with the radiation oncologist and the team at the radiation centre to receive more information about your radiation treatment.

FOLLOW-UP CLINIC VISITS

At the end of your appointment, we will give you an appointment for your next clinic visit, or we will mail one to you after your appointment. We may also give you appointments for tests and/or procedures or referrals to see other health care professionals.

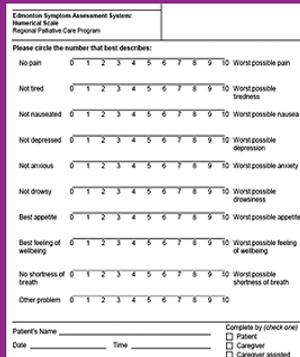
ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

We will also provide support if you have concerns about how to manage your symptoms, or if you need to talk about your diagnosis and/or treatment side effects.

How You are Feeling is Important to Us - Please Let Us Know!

We want to know how you are feeling each time you come to the Cancer Care Clinic. Only you can tell us how you are feeling. Your Symptoms Matter (source: Cancer Care Ontario).

We will work together to gather information:



YOU

Using the Edmonton Symptom Assessment System (ESAS) tool, you will update us on how you are feeling based on nine different symptoms common to patients with cancer. At each visit, before you can see the doctor, your nurse will review your concerns with you in more detail.

YOUR NURSE

Your nurse will keep track of any symptom issues, psychosocial concerns and all treatment-related side effects you have. It is very important that you let us know how you are feeling in between treatments so we can get an accurate picture of how the treatments are affecting you.

YOUR DOCTOR

Your oncologist will work with you and your family to direct your treatment plan. Please be comfortable preparing questions or concerns before you see your doctor.

Your Team and Questions You Might Ask

A group of health care professionals make up your cancer care (oncology) team. You may receive care from some of these team members during your visit to the clinic.



CHILD LIFE SPECIALIST

Speak with your nurse if you have more questions or concerns or would like to be referred to the child life specialist.

A child life specialist helps children and families cope with stressful situations that occur at the hospital, like having an ill family member. They can help you with the following concerns or questions:

1. I do not know what to say to my children about my illness. How do I explain cancer to a child? What do I tell them?
2. I am worried about how my illness will affect my children. How will they deal with all of these changes? What signs and behaviours should I look for?
3. I do not want my children to worry about me. How can I ease their worries?
4. I am hiding aspects of my illness from my children. Is this OK? What is OK to hide and what should I tell them?
5. It would be nice to meet other families dealing with the same issues. Are there support services available for my children and me? Are there services, like camps or playgroups, for my children?

My Questions or Concerns:

CLERICAL SUPPORT ASSOCIATES

To speak with a clerical support associate, call (416) 242-1000 ext. 21500

The clerical support associates at the clinic are your gateway into the treatment process. They create your appointment schedules and make your appointments for lab tests and other outside tests. They also make sure we meet infection control processes and safety checks for the clinic. They can help you with the following concerns or questions:

1. I am staying temporarily with my daughter (son, etc.). Whom do I tell?
2. I have been having a cough with a little fever. Should I wait and tell the nurse?
3. I need to change my appointment. How do I do that?
4. My doctor told me I could come in early for my appointment today. Who do I speak with to come in at 8:00 a.m. instead of 11:30 a.m.?
5. I have an appointment for a CT scan but I am not feeling well. Who do I call to change that appointment?

My Questions or Concerns:

CLINICAL TRIALS COORDINATOR

Ask your oncologist if there are any clinical trials available for your condition.

Speak with your nurse if you have more questions/ concerns or would like to be considered for a clinical trial.

This is the person who coordinates the clinical trials that are taking place at HRH. The clinical trials coordinator will help you learn about the research treatment options available to you. They can help you with the following concerns or questions:

1. Where do I find out about research? I am not sure if my doctor is taking part in any research activities. How do I find out?
2. I have received several types of treatment already. My disease has gotten worse. Are there other treatments available to me?
3. My friend is taking an experimental drug at another hospital. Will this treatment work for me? How do I get this treatment? Will I need to pay for the experimental drug?

My Questions or Concerns:

HOME & COMMUNITY CARE CASE MANAGER

If you feel you need help to be safe at home, please ask the nurse if a homecare referral may help.

The home & community care case managers work with the team for all your homecare-related concerns. They can assess and provide you with support in your home. They also work with us when you need treatment at home. They can help you with the following concerns or questions:

1. I want to remain in my own home for as long as possible, but I can no longer clean my home, care for my yard, or get to the grocery store. What should I do?
2. How do I find information on community support programs, such as transportation services and friendly visiting?
3. I am looking for in-home support, such as nursing, personal care assistance and respite support. Can you help me?
4. How do I choose which residential care facility is best for me?

My Questions or Concerns:

**MEDICATION
REIMBURSEMENT
SPECIALIST**

The cost of some medicines you may use to manage symptoms from your illness or treat side effects from your cancer treatment may not be covered by the government.

The medication reimbursement specialist, also known as a drug access facilitator or drug navigator, can help you find private and public drug funding to cover these costs. While waiting for coverage to start, the medication reimbursement specialist can also find resources that you qualify for that can help you access medicine without further delay. The medication reimbursement specialist can apply for government funding for more costly medicines. Where there is no public or private funding available, they can help you apply to patient support programs from drug manufacturers, if applicable. They can help you with the following concerns or questions:

1. I do not have any drug coverage. My medicine is expensive. How can I afford it?
2. I have bought my medicine already. Can I get reimbursed for it?
3. I am over the age of 65. Do I still have to pay for my medicine?
4. What is a patient support program? Is there one for the medicine I am on?

My Questions or Concerns:

**NURSE
PRACTITIONER**

The nurse practitioner (NP) is a nurse who has special qualifications in helping you manage any symptoms or concerns related to your cancer treatments. The NP works very closely with your oncology doctor, nurses, and other members of the team. The NP may assess you in between your visits with your doctor or during your cancer treatments, depending on the type of concerns you have. They may order additional tests and medicines if you need them to help manage your symptoms. They can help you with the following concerns or questions:

1. I don't really understand my treatment/disease. Can you explain it to me (and my family)?
2. I am experiencing nausea, pain, tiredness, shortness of breath, or a new problem and I am concerned.
3. I am constipated and I need help to relieve it.
4. I am having trouble with side effects.
5. I would like to talk about what I can do to plan for future care.

My Questions or Concerns:

**ONCOLOGY
NURSE**

The nurse in the oncology clinic coordinates all of your care. They have special training in oncology and cancer care treatments and all related symptoms and side effects.

An oncology nurse can help you with the following questions or concerns:

1. My cancer surgery has changed the way my body looks and it makes me sad (or angry, depressed, scared, etc.). I do not know how to get over these feelings. Can you help me?
2. My sex drive is not the same. It is causing problems in my relationship with my husband (or wife, significant other). Is there a drug I can take?
3. My friend told me about a wonderful alternative treatment (for example, acupuncture, chelation therapy, "all natural drug", Chinese tea) to try. Is this OK to do? Will it affect my treatment?
4. My religion says I should have faith and God will heal me. Is it OK to take these medicines? What if God punishes me for this?
5. I still want to have children. Will it be possible after my treatments? Is it OK to get pregnant when I am on treatment?
6. I really do not want to make decisions about my care. Is it OK for my son to make all of my decisions?
7. I feel so tired (nauseated, depressed, etc.) all of the time. I can hardly get dressed in the morning. Is this normal? Will I ever get over it? Is there a medicine to help?
8. I am almost finished with my treatment. What will happen now? What should I worry about? Whom do I contact if something happens?
9. Should I be worried about my daughter getting breast cancer? I heard it runs in families.

My Questions or Concerns:

**ONCOLOGY
PHARMACIST**

The oncology pharmacists can help answer questions you may have about your medicines and treatment regimen. Your treatment may consist of different oral (through the mouth) or intravenous (through the vein) medicines, including chemotherapy, hormonal agents, immunotherapy, or targeted treatments.

The oncology pharmacists will work closely with the rest of the cancer care team to make sure the cancer medicines given at the clinic are safe. They will also address any questions about side effects, drug interactions, and safe dosing of medicines with your clinical team.

They can help you with the following questions or concerns:

1. Could we review my cancer treatment schedule and medicines?
2. Could we review what each medicine does for me and how each one works?
3. Do my cancer medicines work safely with my other prescription medicines, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and diet?

My Questions or Concerns:

**PSYCHIATRIST
(PSYCHOSOCIAL
ONCOLOGY)**

It is important to look after yourself when you are having cancer treatments. You may feel anxiety, sad, depressed, or fearful. Talking to someone about your feelings and having professional counselling may be helpful. Your oncology doctor may refer you to a psychiatrist, who is an important doctor in your cancer care team. The psychiatrist supports you and your family so that you can better cope with the many different feelings you may be experiencing while adjusting to the illness. They can help you with the following questions or concerns:

1. I am stressed or anxious most of the time.
2. I have trouble concentrating, I feel sad, and I cry easily.
3. I feel alone, hopeless and guilty.
4. I have thoughts of harming myself.

My Questions or Concerns:

**REGISTERED
DIETITIAN**

Speak with your nurse if you have more questions or concerns, or would like to be referred to the registered dietitian.

Cancer and related treatments affect your appetite, weight and nutritional status. The registered dietitian can answer any questions you may have and help to support your nutritional needs. They can help you with the following questions or concerns:

1. I have trouble eating because of loss of appetite, sore mouth/throat, taste changes, nausea, or vomiting. What can I do?
2. I have been having issues with constipation or diarrhea. What can I do?
3. I have noticed a change in weight (weight loss or gain). Is this normal?
4. Someone has suggested I take an herbal or natural supplement. Can I take this during my treatment?
5. I have no energy to shop for groceries or cook my meals. What can I do?
6. Whom can I talk to about proper nutrition during my treatment?

My Questions or Concerns:

SOCIAL WORKER

Speak with your nurse if you have more questions or concerns, or would like to be referred to the social worker.

The social worker helps answer practical concerns, like finances and transportation, to more emotional concerns, such as the fears and anxieties that come with a cancer diagnosis. They can help you with the following questions or concerns:

1. I really do not know the best way to handle the feelings (for example, anger, fear, sadness, anxiety, denial) that I have since I found out I have a cancer diagnosis. They are interfering with my family and/or my job. What can I do?
2. My family and/or friends are avoiding me or do not seem comfortable talking about my diagnosis. Is there something I can do?
3. I am not able to do the same things at home or work that I used to do, like cooking dinner or doing laundry. For example, I am too tired, too nauseated, in pain, or too depressed. What services are available?
4. I would like to talk to people who are going through the same things I am experiencing. Where do I go?
5. I am so worried about money. What financial assistance is available? Is there a drug plan I can sign-up for?
6. I am concerned about hair loss. What do I do if my hair falls out?

My Questions or Concerns:

Support for You Through Your Cancer Journey

Coping with cancer is a difficult process. The goal of the oncology team is to work with you to identify concerns, side effects and all related financial, emotional, and spiritual issues as you move through the treatment process. Although we will not be able to offer you all the services and support you may need at the clinic, we can refer you to community providers and support groups with whom we have developed wonderful partnerships. We can also provide you with a list of resources that you may find helpful as you go through your cancer journey.

Humber River Hospital's **Patient & Family Resource Centre** can also help you find information on illness, diagnostic tests, drugs, community resources and more. Call the Centre to obtain a customized information package in the language of your choice or visit the Centre to attend one of its free patient education classes.

The Patient and Family Resource Centre is located on Level 0. It is open from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday to Friday.

Tel: (416) 242-1000 ext. 81200

Email: PFRC@hrh.ca

Web: <https://www.hrh.ca/resources/patient-family-resource-centre/>

How to Get to Humber River Hospital

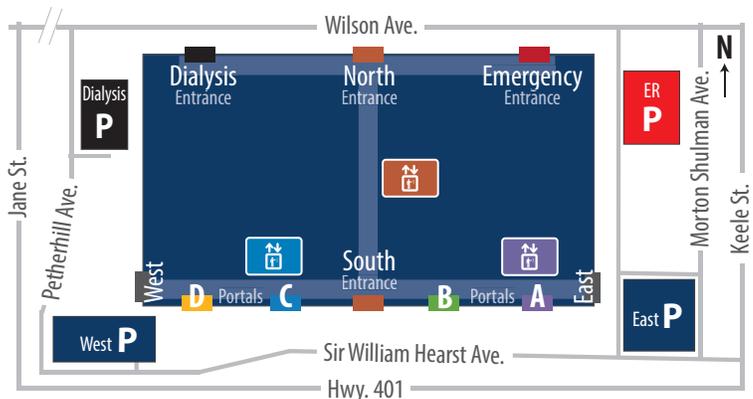
1235 Wilson Ave.,
Toronto, Ont. M3M 0B2
Tel: (416) 242-1000 ext. 21500

VISITOR PARKING

There are 2 parking garages that you can access from Sir William Hearst Avenue. The East parking Garage is the closest garage to the Cancer Care Clinic. From there, you can enter the hospital using the East Entrance or Portal of Care A.

Humber River Hospital parking uses an automated system. Take a ticket upon entry and pay at one of the pay stations located in the hospital or at the parking office in the lot. You can pay for parking by cash or credit card.

There is a discounted rate for patients and their family who visit the clinic often for appointments. More information is available at the parking office.



Please do not park in the fire routes. You may be ticketed and/or towed!



Acknowledgements:

Our partner centres are Stronach Regional Cancer Centre, Southlake Hospital, North York General Hospital, Markham-Stouffville Hospital, Mackenzie Health, and Home & Community Care of the Central Region - Ontario Health.

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The information provided in this handout is for educational purposes. It does not replace the advice or specific instructions from your doctor, nurse, or other healthcare provider. Do not use this information to diagnose or treat. If you have questions about your own care, please speak with your healthcare provider.

English: This information is important! If you have trouble reading this, ask someone to help you.	Italian: Queste informazioni sono importanti! Se ha difficoltà a leggere questo, chiedi aiuto a qualcuno.	Spanish: ¡Esta información es importante! Si tiene dificultad en leer esto, pida que alguien le ayude.
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