



**BC Cancer Agency**

CARE + RESEARCH

*An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority*

# Guidebook for Patients

## Vancouver Centre



Vancouver Centre  
600 West 10th Avenue  
Vancouver, BC

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BC Cancer Agency (BCCA) Patient Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Important Contacts: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Medications: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Introduction to the BC Cancer Agency

British Columbia has 5 regional health authorities and one provincial health authority – the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA). PHSA governs and manages agencies and organizations that plan and/or provide health services on a province wide basis.

The BC Cancer Agency is one of the member agencies of PHSA.

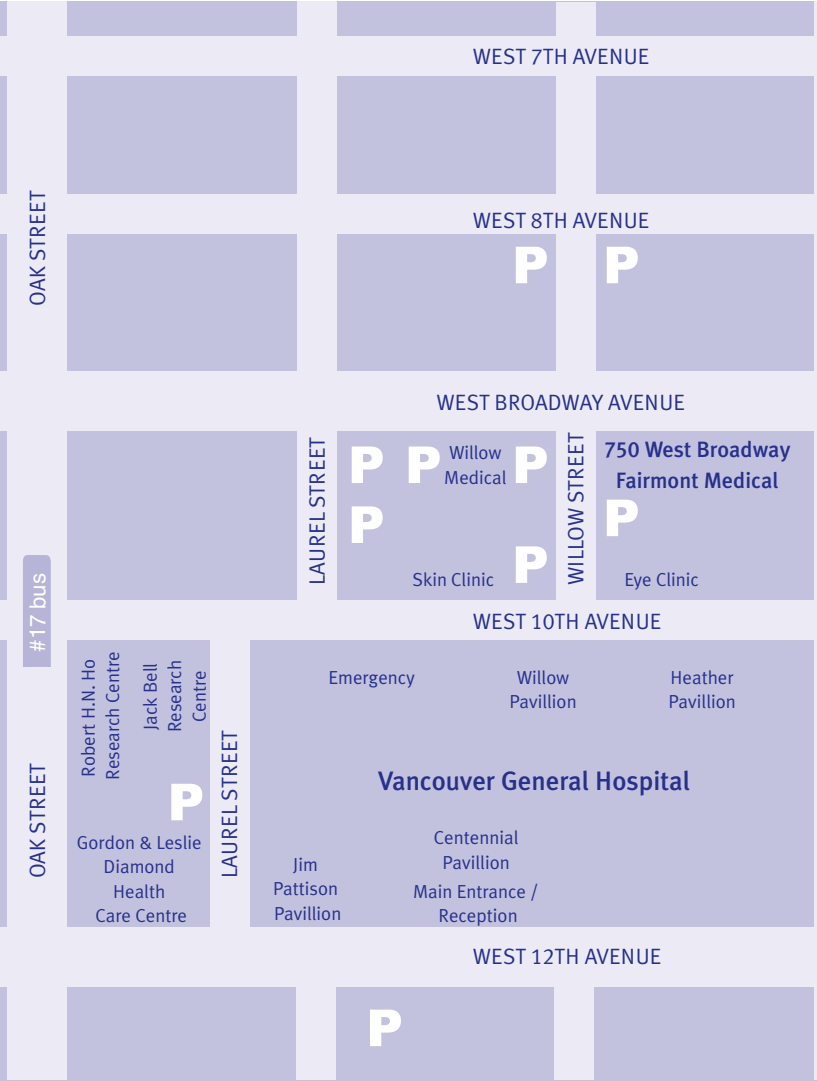
The BC Cancer Agency has 6 cancer centres:



## The mission of the BC Cancer Agency is to:

- Reduce the incidence of cancer
- Reduce the mortality rate of people with cancer
- Improve the quality of life of people living with cancer

Where is the BC Cancer Agency centre where I will receive treatment?



# BC Cancer Agency, Vancouver Centre

## Floor-by-Floor Services/Facilities

<b>1st Floor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the lobby: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information &amp; Admitting Desk</li> <li>- BC Cancer Foundation Office</li> <li>- Cancer Information Centre (CIC)/Library</li> <li>- Courtesy Phone</li> <li>- Phone to taxi service</li> <li>- Bank Machine</li> </ul> </li> <li>Cafeteria (Monday-Friday, 7am-2pm)</li> <li>Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)</li> <li>Functional Imaging (PET Scan)</li> <li>John Jambor Conference Room</li> <li>Nutrition Services, Room 1408</li> <li>Volunteer Services, Room 1411</li> <li>Entrance to BC Cancer Agency Parkade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- East side of building</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>2nd Floor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ambulatory Care Unit Reception <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Check In (for Radiation Therapy Appointments, Systemic Therapy Appointments, &amp; Clinical Trials)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Ambulatory Care Unit (ACU) Stations</li> <li>Surgical Daycare</li> <li>Pain &amp; Symptom Management Clinic</li> <li>Dentistry</li> <li>Mould Room</li> <li>Simulator Room</li> <li>Radiation Therapy Units 1-9</li> <li>Radiation Therapy Units A-D (Access to Level 0 at South side elevators located near Unit 1)</li> <li>Brachytherapy Unit</li> <li>Radiation Treatment Support Centre</li> <li>Entrance to BC Cancer Agency Parkade</li> </ul>
<b>3rd Floor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Laboratory</li> <li>Diagnostic Imaging (X-ray, Ultrasound, CT Scan, Mammogram)</li> <li>Entrance to BC Cancer Agency Parkade</li> </ul>

<b>4th Floor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Release of Information Office, Room 4334 (Monday to Friday, 8am-3:45pm)</li> <li>Administration &amp; Offices</li> </ul>
<b>5th Floor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Patient and Family Counselling, Room 550</li> <li>In-Patient Hospital Unit (5 East/5 West)</li> </ul>
<b>6th Floor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chemotherapy Treatment Unit</li> <li>Medical Daycare Unit</li> <li>Pharmacy (Monday-Friday, 8:30am-5:00pm)</li> <li>Offices</li> </ul>
<b>BC Cancer Agency Research Centre (BCCRC)</b> 675 W. 10th Ave (directly across the street from the BC Cancer Agency)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rix Family Discovery Centre Library</li> <li>Java Express <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coffee shop where 10% of proceeds are given to the BC Cancer Foundation</li> </ul> </li> <li>BC Cancer Foundation Offices</li> <li>Gordon &amp; Leslie Diamond Family Theatre</li> <li>Note: Everything listed is on Level One and is open to the public. All other floors are secure and not accessible</li> </ul>
<b>Fairmont Medical Building</b> 750 W. Broadway, 8th Floor is now home to several Ambulatory Care Clinics for the BC Cancer Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2nd floor: Parking</li> <li>6th floor: Hereditary Cancer Program</li> <li>8th floor: Ambulatory Care Clinic Reception</li> <li>9th floor: Complementary Medicine Education &amp; Outcomes Program (CAMEO)</li> </ul>

## How can I arrange for transportation?

### Volunteer Drivers

The Canadian Cancer Society and Freemason Volunteer Driver program are available Monday to Friday for a ride to your treatment if you do not have other transportation available to you. Please call at least 24 hours ahead of time to book an appointment.

Call: **1.800.663.2524**

### Transit

There are several bus routes that stop within walking distance of the Vancouver Centre. The Broadway-City Hall skytrain station is located one and a half blocks from the centre.

You can visit Translink at [www.triplanning.translink.ca](http://www.triplanning.translink.ca) and enter **600 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, V5Z 4E6** as your destination to find a route that best suites you.

### Travel Assistance Program (TAP)

TAP is available to eligible BC residents who must travel outside their home community to obtain non-emergency, physician-referred specialist medical care, and whose travel expenses are not covered by third party insurance or other government programs. TAP provides discounted rates for ferries, ground transportation such as buses (not BC Transit) and some airlines.

To be eligible, you must be a BC resident and enrolled in the MSP; you must have a physician's referral for medical services that are not available locally. Escorts are also eligible if travelling with those incapable of independent travel.

You can obtain these forms at the Information and Admitting desk in the lobby, or at the Patient and Family Counselling office.

For more information please call: **1.800.465.4911**

Or visit the website: [www.health.gov.bc.ca/tapbc/tap\\_patient.html](http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/tapbc/tap_patient.html)

Once your forms are filled out, to book your reservations please call:

**1.800.661.2668**

## Where can I stay if I'm from out of town?

### Canadian Cancer Society Vancouver Lodge

**575 West 10th Avenue** (across from the Vancouver Centre, N/E corner of 10th and Ash Street)

Low cost accommodation including meals.

To register for a bed or cancel a reservation, call the Lodge at **604.879.9131**

### Local Hotels that provide reduced rates for cancer patients include:

#### Holiday Inn

711 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC, V5Z 3Y2

**604.879.0511**

#### Park Inn & Suites

898 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC, V5Z 1J8

**604.872.8661 or 1.800.663.5403**

For more information, or for information on financial assistance, please contact **Patient and Family Counselling** at **604.877.6000, local 672194**



## Where can I park?

*The entrance to the parkade is off Ash Street at the corner of West 10th Avenue. This is the closest parkade to the BC Cancer Agency Vancouver Centre.*

### How much does it cost?

Parking charges in the visitor lot are \$2.00 for the first half hour, and \$3.75 per hour thereafter. The all day parking rate is a maximum of \$15.00

\*Rates effective July 1st 2010 and are subject to change without notice.

### What if I'm a long-term BC Cancer Agency patient?

Parking passes for long-term BC Cancer Agency patients are valid only for the period issued and are non-refundable. The pass is applicable for parking in the parkade only and it does not guarantee a spot.

Parking pass long-term patient rates:

\$55.00 each seven days or portion

\$110.00 each month or portion

### Where do I get this long-term patient parking pass?

Passes can be purchased from the attendant in the booth at the entrance to the parkade.

### What ID is required to obtain this long-term patient parking pass?

As this rate applies only to BC Cancer Agency long-term patients, please show your BC Cancer Agency Appointment Card if requested, to the Parking Attendant.

### How can I pay?

The parkade will accept debit, credit cards or cash

### Where should I direct my parking pass enquiries?

Please discuss any concerns or issues with the attendant in the parking booth on site or call the Metro lot supervisor at **604.417.6545**

**Note:** Parking meters are also available on surrounding streets, and there are other parkade facilities in the area.

**Please refer to the map on page 2**

## “STOP” For the Protection of our Patients:



**Infection control information is posted at all BCCA entrances.**

Please inform your health care providers if you have been diagnosed with or exposed to an infectious disease or “superbug” (e.g. MRSA, VRE, or C.difficile)

**Please inform your health care providers if, at any time during the course of your treatment, you develop any of the following symptoms:**

- **Fever**
- **Diarrhea**
- **Cough/respiratory symptoms**
- **Skin rash**

Patients experiencing respiratory symptoms may be asked to wear a mask while visiting the centre.

Hand hygiene is the single most effective way to prevent the transmission of infectious illness. Alcohol based hand rub is considered to be the most effective method of cleaning your hands when they are not visibly soiled.

**Please ask your health care providers for information on how to hand wash.**





## What do I need to bring to my first visit?

- Your BC Care Card or a piece of photo ID
- All your medications in their original containers so that the physician may review them with you
- The names and telephone numbers (work and home) of two contact people
- Your health history and any allergies that you may have
- Any X-rays, CDs or DVDs that you may have been given by other physicians or hospitals
- A list of any questions you may have

## What happens at my first visit?

During your first visit, you will be in the centre for at least two or three hours. You may find it helpful to bring someone with you for **company and support** as this first visit can be overwhelming. Having a family member or close friend accompanying you at your appointment could help you to gather all of the new information.

If you require an interpreter at an appointment, let our admitting team know and they will make arrangements, if possible, for a professional interpreter.

Because of the length of your appointment, we also suggest you have a meal before coming (unless otherwise instructed) and/or bring a snack with you. There is a cafeteria in the building that closes at 2pm.

Report to the **Information and Admitting** desk in the lobby of the main entrance. A clerk will assist you and may ask you to complete some documentation in a waiting area. If you were not pre-registered by phone, a clerk will help you complete your registration. If you require assistance, a volunteer will be available to escort you to your first appointment. This is also when you receive your BCCA # (BC Cancer Agency number). You should document it in the space on the inside front cover for future reference.

You will be seen by oncology nurses and physicians in the Ambulatory Care Unit (ACU). You may also be assisted by volunteers who are there to help and support you.

Your medical history will be discussed and a physical examination will be carried out. When the examination is finished an oncologist (a cancer specialist) will review this information along with your reports and records. The oncologist will then sit down with you and your family members to talk about treatment choices and the plan for your ongoing care.

The oncologist may arrange for blood tests, X-rays, and/or scans. You may have to wait for the results of these tests before the best treatment can be designed for you. The role of the oncologist is to advise you about your cancer.

If you have pain or other symptoms, your oncologist may help you and your family doctor manage these, or may refer you to the pain and symptom management team, or other specialists.

Asking questions and taking notes, or having a loved one assist you in this manner, is a great way to stay involved in your treatment plan. Being informed and prepared may help to make the process less overwhelming. You will find space on page 29 to take notes.

At the end of your visit you may be given your next appointment to return to the centre or it may be mailed to you. Sometimes, no further appointment is required and you may be referred to your family physician.



## Who will be on my healthcare team?

**Your healthcare team is a group of healthcare professionals who work to treat your cancer. They may include:**

A **medical oncologist** is a doctor who specializes in diagnosing and treating cancer using chemotherapy, hormonal therapy, biological therapy, and targeted therapy.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

A **radiation oncologist** is a doctor who specializes in the treatment of cancer patients, using radiation therapy as the main mode of treatment.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

A **nurse** gives care. Nurses often have the most contact with you and will answer questions, give medicine and provide emotional support.

Oncology nurses have special training in care for people with cancer.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

A **pathologist** looks at samples of tissue taken from the body under a microscope to diagnose illness or see how the cancer is being affected by the treatment.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

A **pharmacist** prepares cancer drugs and other medications and explains how they work.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

A **physiotherapist** can work with you to restore and maintain physical fitness. They can help you when you have a hard time moving around or carrying out daily activities.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

An **occupational therapist** is similar to a physiotherapist but they also can help you return to work or modify your work activities while you have treatment.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

**Psychiatrists, psychologists, and counsellors** are mental health specialists.

They can help you and your family understand, manage and cope with feelings, thoughts, worries and behaviours.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

A **registered dietitian** can answer your questions on diet and nutrition throughout your treatment and recovery.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

A **social worker/counsellor** helps you and your family cope with the illness and its treatment. Social workers can provide or refer you to counselling, support groups, financial assistance, and other resources.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

Your **family doctor** or **general practitioner (GP)** provides general, primary healthcare to you. They play an important part in continuing your care, especially after your cancer treatments are over.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_





## What kinds of questions could I be asking my doctor?

Cancer centres and other healthcare facilities are very busy places. There may be several healthcare providers caring for you at once. You may need a lot of tests and procedures and you might feel that the amount of information is overwhelming and not clear to you. Therefore, it is important that you remain an active member of your healthcare team and ask questions to understand the information. Don't be afraid, embarrassed, or hesitant to ask for exactly what you need from your team. It is important to be involved in and be vocal in the decisions that affect you. Also, sometimes taking notes can be helpful so you can refer back to them and share outcomes of meetings with family and friends. You have space on page 29 to take notes.

### For example:

- What type of cancer do I have?
- What stage is the cancer? What does that mean?
- What is the grade of the cancer? What does that mean?
- What can be done to treat this cancer?
- What is chemotherapy?
- What is radiation therapy?
- What are the short-term and long-term side effects of these treatments?
  - How long will they last?
- What is a complementary therapy?
- What is an alternative therapy?
- Will I have to purchase any drugs outside of the cancer centre?
- Will these drugs be covered by my Fair Pharmacare?
- What kinds of feelings (such as sadness, anger, vulnerability, loss of control) am I likely to have after the surgery or other treatments?
- Where can I find help for me and my family and friends to cope with our feelings?
- When will I get back to my normal energy level?
- Will I be able to work while on treatment?
- Are there any symptoms that I should report right away?
  - What constitutes an emergency?
  - Who do I call?
  - When should I go to the emergency room?
- Are there any changes I can make to my lifestyle to improve my health?
- Who should I contact if I have additional questions?

## What resources are available to me?

### Resources at the BC Cancer Agency:

#### BC Cancer Agency Library

The BC Cancer Agency offers library and information services to patients, their families, members of the public, and health-care professionals. The library will help you find information on: cancer treatment, clinical trials, coping with cancer, information for children, cancer information in other languages, relaxation techniques, etc. Books and audiovisuals (DVDs, videos, CDs) can be freely borrowed for four weeks at a time. Library materials can be mailed to borrowers outside the lower mainland with free return mailing labels. The library can also help you find reliable and accurate internet sites on your condition and treatments.

**[www.bccancer.bc.ca/PPI/Library/default.htm](http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/PPI/Library/default.htm)**

**email: [library@bccancer.bc.ca](mailto:library@bccancer.bc.ca)**

Please refer to page 28 for further contact information.

#### CAMEO (Complementary Medicine Education & Outcomes Research Program)

You may be considering using therapies beyond conventional cancer treatments to improve your health. These types of therapies will be referred to as complementary and alternative medicine. **Complementary therapies** are products and practices used along with conventional medical treatment.

**Alternative therapies** are products and practices that are used instead of conventional treatments. Some examples of complementary and alternative medicines are: natural health products (herbs, vitamins, and herbal supplements), physiotherapy, massage therapy, acupuncture, traditional Chinese medicine, traditional Aboriginal medicine, and healing touch.

#### How to make safe complementary and alternative therapy choices:

##### Ask your doctor about using complementary and alternative medicine while you are in treatment

In many cases it is preferred that you stop your complementary and alternative therapies while you are undergoing treatments for cancer. For example, grapefruit juice can slow down or speed up how your body uses a chemotherapy drug. This means you could end up with a higher or lower level in your body than desired.

#### Think about your goals for using the complementary and alternative therapies

Does the therapy have the ability to help you reach your goals? Remember that goals may be physical, emotional, and/or spiritual. Be careful of therapies that claim to “cure” your cancer.

#### Find out about the risks and benefits of the therapy

Think about the research behind the therapy. How trustworthy is the information given? It is important to balance and consider what is known, as well as what is not known about a therapy. Also, make sure to consider what a safe dose of the therapy is. More is not always better!

### **Check out the training, credentials, and experience of the complementary and alternative health care provider**

As well, the costs of using complementary and alternative therapies are in many cases not covered in your medical insurance plan. Consider whether you can afford to participate in therapy.

### **What complementary and alternative services are available in your local community?**

BC Cancer Agency centres and local hospitals may offer mind-body and exercise therapies. Don't forget to also ask to see the Registered Dietician or Pharmacist if you have questions about your diet or the safety of a natural health product.

Once you have made your decision about taking a complementary or alternative therapy, it is important that you tell your oncologist and family doctor. Knowing all the therapies you are using allows health care providers to provide care that is complete and safe. It is also important to have a plan about how you will monitor your use of a complementary or alternative therapy to see if it is meeting your goals and not causing any bad side effects. The Complementary Medicine Education & Outcomes Research Program (CAMEO) is a joint research project of the University of British Columbia School of Nursing and the BC Cancer Agency. CAMEO provides evidence-based information about complementary medicine to patients, their family and support persons, and oncology health care providers through education courses and lectures, published documents, and individual decision-support consultations.

**[www.bccancer.bc.ca/cameo](http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/cameo)**

Call: **604.707.5960** or

Toll free **1.800.633.3333**, local **675960**

### **Interpreters**

If requested an interpreter may be booked by Information and Admitting when they contact you to set up your first appointment if available.

Please refer to page 28 for contact information.

### **Nutrition**

If you are having difficulty eating, drinking or if you are losing weight during treatment, ask your nurse or doctor to make a referral to the dietitian. Nutrition is important in cancer care to help reduce treatment side effects and to help you maintain your weight. A registered dietitian is available, by appointment, for counselling Monday to Friday. Advice can also be given by telephone.

**[www.bccancer.bc.ca/PPI/copingwithcancer/nutrition/default.htm](http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/PPI/copingwithcancer/nutrition/default.htm)**

Please refer to page 28 for contact information.

### **Patient and Family Counselling Services**

It is natural to experience fear, anger, helplessness or other distressing feelings when you or a family member is faced with a diagnosis of cancer and its treatment. Professionally trained counsellors in Patient and Family Counselling Services are available to speak with you and to assist you throughout the course of your illness. Patient and Family Counselling counsels patients, caregivers, couples and families and offers group support programs. This can include discussion and planning regarding how to inform your loved ones, assist with treatment decision making, as well as palliative and end of life care and concerns. Assistance and information about transportation, community services, interpreters, financial assistance, prescription costs and other practical resources are also available.

**[www.bccancer.bc.ca/PPI/copingwithcancer/default.htm](http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/PPI/copingwithcancer/default.htm)**

Please refer to page 28 for contact information.

### **Pain and Symptom Management/Palliative Care**

All cancer patients, including those who may be cured, are welcome to contact Pain and Symptom Management/Palliative Care. Palliative care is an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problems associated with life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems - physical, psychosocial, and spiritual. Patients come to the clinic to improve pain control, cope with other physical problems related to cancer (for example; severe nausea, shortness of breath or fatigue), and they come for help with emotional and social concerns that come with living with cancer.

What is provided:

- Review of your physical, emotional and social concerns
- Personal treatment plan, which may include medication and nonmedicinal support
- Members of the team meet with patients and/or family
- Referral to community services and resources
- Information about pain and symptom management
- Information about Advance Care Planning

Usually oncologists initiate referrals, but we accept referrals from other BC Cancer Agency staff, family doctors, and other specialists, and directly from patients and family members.

Please refer to page 28 for contact information.

## Pharmacy

Pharmacy provides a full range of services for both inpatients and outpatients. Outpatient cancer treatment medications are provided free of charge at the Pharmacy on the 6th floor. Pharmacy also provides medications for intravenous administration and for patients admitted to the inpatient unit. Medication counselling, medication review, and drug information services are also provided for both outpatients and inpatients. The outpatient Pharmacy is open for service Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 5:00pm. (closed on Stat holidays)

Please refer to page 28 for contact information.

## Prevention Programs

For cancer patients, their families, and the general public, focusing on the five main modifiable risk factors for cancer is important for overall health. For those cancers that are preventable, the preventable risk factors are:

- Tobacco use
- Poor diet
- Being overweight
- Lack of exercise
- Sun/tanning bed damage

For those having experienced cancer that are at risk for a second primary cancer, as well as those who have never had cancer, making lifestyle choices based on these modifiable risk factors can be helpful, as can using our screening programs. Prevention is the very first stage in the continuum of cancer care that BC Cancer Agency prides itself on providing.

Prevention Programs take an evidence-based approach to educating about healthy lifestyle choices related to cancer prevention. We offer cancer prevention information to patients, their families and the general public, as well as run programs such as Healthy Living Schools, Sun Safe Daycares, and Stop Smoking Before Surgery.

- Our main website is located at:  
<http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/PPI/Prevention/default.htm>
- For information on the prevention of Second Primary Cancers, visit our interactive website at: <http://www.prevention4survivors.org/>
- Our interactive award winning youth oriented site is located at:  
<http://www.hi5living.org/>

## Support Groups

Patients and family members can attend support groups offered in any of the Lower Mainland cancer centres. Please contact the Patient and Family Counselling Services for more information.

Please refer to page 28 for contact information.



## Telehealth

Telehealth is the use of technology to provide health care services. Videoconferencing is one example. Arranged from a private location in your community, it enables you to see and talk to a health care professional at the cancer centre without having to be in that centre. You are able to ‘meet’ with your health care professional using a television screen, video camera, and microphone that operate over a secure network. This videoconference may mean you do not have to travel to the cancer centre for all appointments.

This service is available for out-of-town patients in many communities throughout the province. For further information about telehealth services and to see if they are appropriate for you, please discuss with your health care professional.

## What other resources are available to me?

### Resources in the Community:

#### CancerConnection - Canadian Cancer Society

CancerConnection puts you in touch with someone who has been there. When you call or register online you'll be matched with a volunteer who has lived through a similar cancer experience, including the type of cancer, the course of treatment, and similarities in lifestyle. This trained volunteer will listen, share their experience about living with cancer and provide emotional support. All conversations are confidential and allow you to talk to someone who really understands what you are going through. CancerConnection is available to people anywhere in Canada in multiple languages and at any stage of their cancer journey. **Email:** [cancerconnection@bc.cancer.ca](mailto:cancerconnection@bc.cancer.ca)

#### Cancer Information Service - Canadian Cancer Society

The Cancer Information Service (CIS) offers general information about cancer as well as services available for cancer patients in communities throughout the province. It is open 9am-6pm Monday to Friday. Service in Chinese is available Tuesday and Thursday from 6:30pm-8:30pm.

**Email:** [cancerinfo@bc.cancer.ca](mailto:cancerinfo@bc.cancer.ca)

**Call:** The Canadian Cancer Society at **1.888.939.3333**

#### Canadian Red Cross – Health Equipment Loan Program (HELP)

The Red Cross loans out basic health equipment, including wheelchairs, bath aids, toileting aids, walking aids, and other aids to daily living. Referral from a doctor/nurse/physiotherapist/occupational therapist is needed for all equipment loans.

For details, depot location, operation hours, and availability of equipment, visit: [www.redcross.ca](http://www.redcross.ca) and follow the links to the HELP Program

#### HealthLink BC

British Columbians have trusted health information at their fingertips with HealthLink BC at [www.healthlinkbc.ca](http://www.healthlinkbc.ca)

On their website, you can learn about health topics, check your symptoms, or find health services and resources near you. Call **8-1-1** for symptom advice, 24/7, every day of the year.

#### Integrative Medicine Services – Memorial Sloan Kettering

This website includes an easy-to-search database of natural health products and information on individual complementary and alternative therapies.

**[www.mskcc.org/mskcc](http://www.mskcc.org/mskcc)**

## Frequently Asked Questions

### How does the BC Cancer Agency relate to my family doctor?

Your family doctor will be receiving reports and information about what is happening at the cancer centre. He/she will remain your primary physician and you should continue to see him/her for other health issues as you have before. Your family doctor can also be very helpful in managing issues that arise during and after your treatment and provide care for you closer to home when possible.

### Will I see my oncologist in the same room at every visit?

You may see your oncologist in a different room at each appointment; therefore it is necessary to check in at the Ambulatory Care Unit Reception.

### Can I see my oncologist without an appointment?

Unfortunately, we do not have a walk-in clinic. All appointments need to be pre-booked. Please call the Admitting desk if you have questions or concerns or see your family doctor.

Please refer to page 28 for contact information.

### What if I need to change or confirm an appointment?

To change or confirm an appointment please call the Ambulatory Care Unit Appointment Booking line.

Please refer to page 28 for contact information.

### What does a blank space mean on my appointment card?

If there is a blank space or a line on your card without a time, this means you will be notified by telephone with the time before your appointment or treatment.

### Why is there a wait between my lab (blood draw) and my oncologist appointment?

If you have lab work done outside of the BC Cancer Agency it may take several days for your oncologist to receive the results.

If you have lab work done at the BC Cancer Agency it can take between 1.5-2.5 hours for your oncologist to receive the results.

### How can I arrange to refill my prescription?

First call the Pharmacy where your prescription was filled (BC Cancer Agency Pharmacy or local).

If refills are not available, please call your oncologist's secretary.

Please refer to page 28 for contact information.

### Can I smoke at the centre?

The BC Cancer Agency and grounds are strictly a “non-smoking” environment.

### Can I use a cell phone at the centre?

You may use your cell phone outside of the buildings or in the waiting areas of either the Vancouver Centre or Fairmont building, with the exception of those areas with signage indicating cell phones may not be used.

Out of respect for the patients we ask that you keep your cell phone on vibrate when in the cancer centre.

### Can I wear scent?

The BC Cancer Agency is a Scent Free environment.

In consideration of other patients and staff who have scent related allergies kindly refrain from wearing perfume, scented hairspray, cologne, scented deodorant, aftershave or other scented products.

Thank you for your cooperation.

### Can I bring my pet?

Kindly do not bring pets into the centre. Only guide dogs and dogs pre-approved under our “pet therapy” program are permitted.

### Where can I find more information online?

The BC Cancer Agency website offers a wealth of information for patients and the public.

Please visit [www.bccancer.bc.ca](http://www.bccancer.bc.ca)



## Where can I get information on Fair Pharmacare?

All BC citizens accessing health care must be registered with Fair Pharmacare. This is particularly important in order to receive any possible financial subsidies or assistance with prescription drugs.

### If you:

- Need to register;
- Are unsure if you are registered;
- Are unsure of your qualifications for a subsidy;
- Or if you are unsure of what your deductible is

### You have three choices:

- 1) Ask: Your pharmacist.
- 2) Call: Health Insurance BC Inquiry Line  
(Mon-Fri 8am - 8pm and Sat 8am - 4pm):
  - From Vancouver call: **604.683.7151**
  - From the rest of BC call toll-free: **1.800.663.7100**
- 3) Visit: The Pharmacare website at:  
**[www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/Pharmacare](http://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/Pharmacare)**
  - Register for Fair Pharmacare and check the status of your registration.

### For all of these options, you will need to provide your Care Card number

It is important to be aware of what Fair Pharmacare medical coverage you have and what your ID number is so that you can receive appropriate coverage.



# How is my personal data collected, used & shared?

When you are receiving care, treatment and services at the BC Cancer Agency, our staff and physicians will collect personal information from you. Where permitted, we may ask your family, friends, or other organizations to give us information about you (e.g. copies of records, medication information or test results). Your information may be entered into our electronic health information system to assist authorized persons in quickly accessing pertinent information wherever you may be receiving care or services.

We collect, use and share your personal information under the primary authority of the BC Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA). FIPPA and other legislations authorize us to use and share your personal information for these reasons:

- To identify you and keep in contact with you about your health care
- To provide ongoing care and support of your care activities
- To help us plan, monitor, maintain and improve our care and services
- For education and training (e.g. medical students) and to conduct research with your consent or as permitted by law
- To know your eligibility for benefits and services and to arrange medical services billing
- To enable parties (e.g. Ministry of Health Services, Canadian Institute of Health Information) to confirm your identity, conduct planning and improvement activities, measure performance and fund health care
- To analyze, manage and control disease outbreaks and monitor the overall health of people
- As required by law (e.g. court order, reportable conditions) and as authorized by FIPPA

Your health information will be provided to your referring physician, other authorized health care professionals and their support staff, or health care agencies and facilities involved in your care to support continuous and consistent care and service. In some cases, these health professionals may look up your health information in our electronic health information systems in order to provide you with direct or supporting services.

Requests for access to your health record can be made by contacting the Release of Information Office in the cancer centre where you are receiving your treatment.

Please refer to page 28 for contact information.

## eHealth and your information

eHealth is a provincial initiative that allows certain aspects of your health information to be accessed by authorized health care professionals throughout the province and not just within a particular region. Each Health Authority sends specific health information to a province-wide electronic information system, where it is stored with strict protections and used for limited and authorized purposes. For more information about eHealth, please visit the government eHealth website at [www.health.gov.bc.ca/ehealth](http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/ehealth)



# Glossary of Terms

## **Ambulatory Care Chemotherapy Unit (ACU)**

An outpatient unit where chemotherapy drugs are administered intravenously.

## **Benign Tumour**

An abnormal swelling or growth that is not a malignant or spreading cancer and is usually harmless.

## **Biopsy**

The surgical removal of a piece of tissue from a patient for microscopic examination.

## **Brachytherapy**

The use of radioactive “seed” implanted directly into a tumour. This allows a very high but sharply localized dose of radiation to be given to a tumour while sparing surrounding, healthy tissue from radiation exposure.

## **Cancer**

A large group of more than 100 diseases characterized by uncontrolled growth and spread of abnormal cells.

## **Carcinogen**

Any substance that causes cancer.

## **Carcinoma**

A form of cancer that arises in tissues that cover or line such organs as skin, intestines, uterus, lung and breast.

## **Chemotherapy**

Treatment of disease by chemical compounds.

## **Clinical Trials**

The process by which new cancer treatments are tested in humans. Clinical trials are conducted after experiments in animals and preliminary studies in humans have shown that a new treatment method is likely to be effective.

## **Computerized Tomography (CT) Scan**

A technique providing multiple cross-sectional X-ray images generated by computer.

A CT scan can provide valuable information such as the presence, size, and location of a tumour and its impact on surrounding tissue.

## **Grade of Cancer**

Describes the appearance of cancer cells under the microscope, and how differently they have become from what normal cells look like.

## **Hormone Therapy**

A treatment in which hormones (as well as anti-hormones and other factors which regulate the endocrine glands) are used to fight some cancers of the breast, endometrium and prostate.

## **Lymph Gland (Node)**

Our bodies have a network of lymph vessels and lymph nodes. These glands or nodes act as filters for impurities in the body and concentrate lymphocytes used to fight infection. Cancer can start in these nodes or spread to them.

## **Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)**

A procedure that produces cross-sectional images of the body without the use of X-rays or radioactive materials. MRI uses a strong magnetic field, radio waves and a computer to produce excellent soft tissue images that are read by a radiologist.

## **Mammography**

An X-ray examination of the breasts using specialized equipment.

## **Metastasis**

The process whereby cancer cells from the original tumour spreads to other sites in the body.

## **Positron Emission Tomography (PET) Functional Imaging**

PET is an imaging procedure that, when combined with Computed Tomography (CT), enables physicians to more accurately diagnose and manage disease, especially cancer.

## **Radiation Therapy**

The use of radiation (high-energy rays) to kill or shrink tumour cells. Used to treat some, but not all cancers.

## **Stage of Cancer**

There are two systems used together to classify cancer. TNM is a type of classification used to describe the extent of the cancer’s involvement in your body based on tumour (site and size), node (involvement of lymph nodes), and metastasis (spread). The second classification used is Spread of Cancer which uses a 1-4 scale system to describe the location of the cancer in your body.

## **Stem Cells**

The immature cells from which all blood cells develop. These cells may divide to form more stem cells or mature into a variety of blood cell types.

## **Tumour Group**

Groups of medical specialists at the BC Cancer Agency who set cancer treatment policies and protocols for the various types of tumour sites, i.e. prostate, breast, colorectal cancer.

## **Tumour Markers**

Substances which provide a test for the presence of actively growing cancer; not recommended for early detection or screening of cancer but used at the BC Cancer Agency to indicate whether a particular treatment has reduced the size of a known tumour, or whether a tumour is growing.

## Ambulatory Care Unit Appointment Booking

Call this number for booking, cancellation, or questions regarding radiation therapy and systemic (chemo) therapy appointments

**604.877.6218 or toll-free 1.800.663.3333, local 676218**

## BC Cancer Agency Library

Call this number for any questions regarding library resources

**604.675.8001 or toll-free 1.888.675.8001, local 8001**

## CAMEO (Complementary Medicine Education & Outcomes Research Program)

Call this number for information regarding complementary medicine

**604.707.5960 or toll-free 1.800.633.3333, local 675960**

## Information and Admitting Desk

Call this number for all issues regarding your initial appointment

**604.877.6000 or toll-free 1.800.663.3333, local 676000**

## Nutrition

**604.877.6000, local 672013 or toll-free 1.800.663.3333, local 672013**

## Pain and Symptom Management/Palliative Care

**604.877.6000 or toll-free 1.800.633.3333, local 672645**

## Patient and Family Counselling Services

**604.877.6000 or toll-free 1.800.663.3333, local 672194**

## Patient Care Nurse Line

Call this number with any medical inquiries for a registered nurse in Radiation Therapy or Systemic (Chemo) Therapy Monday-Friday, 8:30am–4:30pm (except statutory holidays)

**604.877.6025 or toll-free 1.800.663.3333, local 676025**

If you have a medical inquiry outside of the regular business hours, please call:

**604.877.6000, local 672600**

## Pharmacy

For information about your prescription, such as refills, please call **604.877.6135**

For non-urgent questions about your drug therapy or complementary therapies,

**please call 604.877.6098 local 672235** Monday-Friday, 8:30am-5:00pm

**604.877.6135 or toll-free 1.800.663.3333, local 676135**

## Pharmacy Drug Information Line

Call this number with any non-urgent questions regarding medication

Tuesday-Friday, 8:30am-5:00pm **604.877.6000 or toll-free 1.800.663.3333, local 672235**

## Release of Information

Call if you require a copy of your health record

**604.877.6000 or toll-free 1.800.663.3333, local 672334**

## Vancouver Centre Switchboard

Call this number to be directed to any department within the BC Cancer Agency

**604.877.6000 or 1.800.663.3333**



**BC Cancer Agency**

CARE + RESEARCH

*An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority*

## BC Cancer Agency Centres:

### **Abbotsford Centre**

32900 Marshall Road

Abbotsford, BC V2S 1K2

**604.851.4710 or toll-free 1.877.547.3777**

### **Fraser Valley Centre**

13750 96th Avenue

Surrey, BC V3V 1Z2

**604.930.2098 or toll-free 1.800.523.2885**

### **Centre for the North**

1215 Lethbridge Street

Prince George, BC V2N 7E9

**250.645.7300 or toll-free 1.855.775.7300**

### **Sindi Ahluwalia Hawkins Centre for the Southern Interior**

399 Royal Avenue

Kelowna, BC V1Y 5L3

**250.712.3900 or toll-free 1.888.563.7773**

### **Vancouver Centre**

600 West 10th Avenue

Vancouver, BC V5Z 4E6

**604.877.6000 or toll-free 1.800.663.3333**

### **Vancouver Island Centre**

2410 Lee Avenue

Victoria, BC V8R 6V5

**250.519.5500 or toll-free 1.800.670.3322**

### **BC Cancer Agency Research Centre**

675 West 10th Avenue

Vancouver, BC V5Z 1L3

**604.675.8000 or toll-free 1.888.675.8001**

### **BC Cancer Foundation**

150 - 686 W. Broadway

Vancouver, BC V5Z 1G1

**604.877.6040 or toll-free 1.888.906.CURE/2873**