

Being Well



Artist Statement Being Well

I used warm colors in this painting to convey a sense of peace. I then placed her in an environment that shows her connection to the earth and the important part it plays in healing of the whole self. She knows she is surrounded by the natural world and its comfort. Her expression is one of strength and she has no fear. Unwavering in her faith and accepting of what has been placed in her path, she is trusting life.

She even has a hint of a smile, even though she is showing signs of side effects of treatment. It has not shaken or taken away her identity. Instead it has affirmed her life and given her the gift of new perspective and appreciation.

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Paiute-Shoshone
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Cancer Treatments: What to Expect

GOALS

Participants will gain a basic understanding of cancer treatments, common side effects of treatment, and comfort measures.

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this section, each participant will be able to:

EXPLAIN why a person diagnosed with cancer may need several types of cancer treatment

KNOW what to expect when having cancer treatment

UNDERSTAND that people living with cancer experience a variety of physical and emotional stresses both during and after their cancer treatment and that healing from these stresses may take a long time

In your community, what are traditional ways of healing to support a person's cancer treatment journey?



If someone in your community is being treated for cancer, how can you as a CHR or CHA/P support their healing journey?

Possibilities include:

- Call or visit to say hello and let the person know they are not alone.
- Bring a meal.
- Share cancer resources.

**Cancer
Treatments:
*What to Expect***

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Cancer Treatments: What to Expect

Check Your Understanding

Cancer Treatments: *What to Expect*

Check Your Understanding

	<i>TRUE</i>	<i>FALSE</i>
1. Cancer treatment is most effective when the cancer has not spread to other parts of the body.		
2. When a person's hair falls out from cancer treatment, it never grows back.		
3. Remission is when there are no more cancer cells in a person's body.		
4. Cancer treatment can include one or more of the following: chemotherapy, radiation, and surgery.		
5. If a person's cancer recurs it can be treated again.		
6. If cancer is found early, it is more easily and effectively treated.		
7. Surgery is often the first step in treating cancer.		
8. Chemotherapy is a systemic treatment.		
9. Radiation therapy is a systemic treatment.		
10. There is no need to worry if a person receiving chemotherapy has a temperature of 100.5 degrees or higher.		

Cancer Treatments: What to Expect

Cancer treatment includes many different ways of healing to support a person's physical, emotional, and spiritual journey of wellness.

Each person's treatment is individualized to best support that person's wellness.



Understanding Cancer Treatments

After a diagnosis of cancer is made, the work of healing begins. Cancer treatment can include many different ways of healing to support a person's physical, emotional, and spiritual journey of wellness. What traditional healing ways are used in your community? How will they support a person's cancer treatment journey? Meditation practices, healing ceremonies, or prayer may provide spiritual strength and comfort. Laughter, music, and art can also support a person's holistic healing journey.

In developing the best treatment plan for each person, the health care provider considers:

- type of cancer
- extent or stage of the disease when first diagnosed
- person's age
- overall health
- response to treatment

Some cancers are easier to treat than others and the person may be considered cured as soon as the malignant or cancer tumor is surgically removed. Some types of cancer are easier to find and diagnose early. Cancers affecting internal organs, such as the lungs or stomach, are not as easy to diagnose. These cancers often are not found until the disease is more advanced and more difficult to treat. When the cancer is found early, while in its site of origin (in-situ), treatment is more effective.

What is a cure?

The word **cure** means the person's cancer is not likely to reappear. Time periods of one year, five years, and ten years describe cure rates for certain types of cancer. Because cancer may reappear, some health care providers prefer to use the phrase, "five-year survival without clinical evidence of disease" instead of the word cure.

What is remission?

Remission means that all signs and symptoms of the disease are gone, although cancer cells may remain hidden in the body. Remission is not the same as cure. Remission may be temporary and the cancer may reappear. Remission may be described as a

- **Complete Remission (C.R.) or No Evidence of Disease (N.E.D.)** - where there are no signs or symptoms of disease
- **Partial Remission (P.R.)** - when the tumor has responded partially to treatment by shrinking or decreasing in size
- **Stable Disease** - when the cancer, as a result of treatment, does not appear to be spreading or growing

Types of Cancer Treatments

Treatment methods may be used alone or in combination, depending upon the type of cancer, the extent or stage of the cancer, and the age and health of the person. A combination of different treatments is used because each cancer treatment attacks cancer cells and their growth cycle in a different way. The use of more than one type of cancer treatment is called combined modality therapy or treatment (C.M.T.). Other common words are adjuvant therapy or adjuvant treatment. Adjuvant means to help or assist. Adjuvant therapies help treat cancer and prevent cancer recurrence. Different types of treatments are used in combination to kill as many cancer cells as possible. Surgery and radiation are local treatments, removing or attacking the cancer cells at the primary site. Chemotherapy is a systemic treatment attacking cancer cells throughout the body.

Cancer treatments are designed to kill as many cancer cells as possible. Unfortunately, it is difficult to limit the effects of current treatment to the cancer cells alone, and often healthy cells are damaged. This is why people need time to heal and regain strength between treatments.

If cancer comes back and is detected, a treatment plan to provide the best possible outcome will be discussed. Together the patient and their health care provider choose the best plan of care. All patients have the right to have medical information shared with them in ways they can understand. This may include having an interpreter translate information or asking the health care provider to explain medical words in easy to understand English. It can be helpful to have someone go with the patient to their appointments to support patients in talking with their health care provider and take notes about the person's cancer and treatment plan. With the patient's permission, CHA/Ps or CHRs can encourage family members or friends to go to appointments or treatments with the patient.

Strong, healthy, well-nourished people often have few side effects and, in many cases, continue their normal daily activities during cancer treatment. Remember that while the side effects of cancer treatment may be unpleasant or uncomfortable, most are temporary and go away after treatment is completed.

One common side effect for most treatments is loss of appetite. It can be a challenge to maintain a healthy diet during treatment. Getting adequate calories and nutrition is essential in helping the body heal. People who are well-nourished before cancer treatment and continue to eat a well balanced diet throughout treatment are less likely to experience severe side effects.

If the person does have side effects from their cancer treatment it is important for the person to tell their provider. There are many different ways to decrease the side effects of cancer treatment.

Cancer Treatments: *What to Expect*

Types of Cancer Treatments

CHR's can help patients to understand the importance of asking questions about their cancer treatment plan and recognizing and reporting any cancer treatment side effects as explained by their health care provider.

Cancer Treatments: *What to Expect*

*Clinical trials
help health care
providers
determine what
cancer
treatment
options are
most effective.*

What is the goal of treatment?

The goal of cancer treatment varies depending upon the type and the stage of cancer and the overall health of the person. After a complete evaluation and determination of the specific cancer and stage, the patient, their family, and their health care provider will discuss the goal of her or his treatment plan. It is important for the person to understand their treatment plan and goal.

If the cancer is found early, cure may be the goal. Other times, remission may be the goal of treatment. **Complete remission (C.R.)** or **no evidence of disease (N.E.D.)** mean that all signs and symptoms of the disease are gone, but there is a chance the cancer may return. If C.R. is not possible, the goal of treatment may be **partial remission (P.R.)** to decrease or shrink the cancer. For some people the goal may be **stable disease**, to keep the cancer from spreading or growing. If there is no treatment available to prevent further spreading of the cancer, palliation may be the primary goal of treatment. **Palliative care** focuses on comfort and providing the best quality of life. Many people now live with cancer as a chronic disease.

What are clinical trials?

Clinical trials are research studies that evaluate promising new treatment options. The purpose of these research studies is to find better ways to prevent, detect, diagnose, and treat cancer and to improve cancer patients' quality of life. Clinical trials offer important treatment options for many people with cancer and may be offered as part of a person's treatment plan for cancer. People who participate in clinical trials may have the first opportunity to benefit from a new treatment. They also make an important contribution to the advancement of knowledge to fight cancer. People with cancer may volunteer to be part of a clinical trial. To learn more about clinical trials in your area you can contact the Cancer Information Service at 1 800-4CANCER or ask your health care provider.

There are 5 phases of clinical trials.

PHASE 1: This is the first phase of a clinical trial and the purpose is to determine a safe dose for humans. The people who participate in phase 1 clinical trials are real heroes in choosing to devote the rest of their lives to improve the quality of life for future cancer patients.

PHASE 2: Research that combines a current standard therapy with a new drug.

PHASE 3: Research trials that compare a new drug to a current standard therapy.

PHASE 4: Research trials to determine how effective a drug is when treating cancer.

PHASE 5: Clinical trials concerned with the effects of treatment on a person's quality of life.

Surgery



Surgery removes a cancer tumor by cutting it out. Healthy tissue surrounding the cancer will also be removed to eliminate any cancer cells that may be hidden there. Surgery is often the first step in treating cancer. It is most effective when the cancer is still confined to its original site and can be completely removed.

Types of specialized surgery include:

- **RADICAL SURGERY:** the removal of the tumor as well as tissues, organs, and lymph glands near the tumor site that may contain cancer cells.
- **PALLIATIVE SURGERY:** surgery to relieve pain, to control the spread of the cancer, or to provide comfort care. Nerves may also be cut to relieve pain.
- **PREVENTIVE SURGERY:** the removal of a benign (noncancerous) growth, which might become malignant if left untreated. It is often used for precancerous growths such as moles on the skin or polyps in the colon.

Side Effects of Surgery

The side effects of surgery and a person's recovery time depend upon the location of the tumor, the type of operation, and the person's general health.



Hormone Therapy

Some types of cancer, including most breast and prostate cancers depend upon hormones to grow. Hormones are natural substances produced in the body. Sometimes, people have surgery to remove organs such as the ovaries or testicles that make the hormones. In other cases, medicines are used to stop hormone production or change the way hormones work. Like chemotherapy, hormone therapy is a systemic treatment; it affects cells throughout the body.

Side Effects of Hormone Therapy

Hormone therapy may cause nausea, vomiting, swelling, weight gain, and hot flashes. In women, hormone therapy may cause menstrual periods to be interrupted or ended, vaginal dryness, and loss of fertility. Common hormone therapy medications for women include: tamoxifen®, arimidex® and lupron®. In men, hormone therapy may cause impotence, loss of sexual desire, or loss of fertility. These changes may be temporary, long lasting, or permanent. Common hormone therapy medications for men include: lupron®, zoladex®, and eulexin®.

Cancer Treatments: *What to Expect*

Surgery

Surgery

removes a

tumor by

cutting it out.

**Cancer
Treatments:
What to Expect**

Chemotherapy

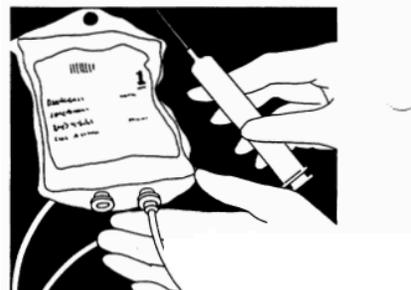
*Chemotherapy
is a systemic
treatment,
meaning the
drugs flow
through the
bloodstream to
nearly every
part of the
body.*

Chemotherapy



Chemotherapy uses drugs to kill cancer cells. Most anticancer drugs are injected into a vein (intravenous or IV) or into a muscle (intramuscular or IM); some are given by mouth (po).

Chemotherapy is a systemic treatment, meaning the drugs flow through the bloodstream to nearly every part of the body.



In chemotherapy treatment, medicines are given to attack rapidly dividing cells, such as cancer cells. Chemotherapy is given when there is a possibility that cancer cells have spread from the primary cancer site to other parts of the body or as a way to help ensure there are no cancer cells hidden in the body.

Often, people who need many doses of IV chemotherapy receive the drugs through a large catheter or central line (a thin flexible tube) that is left in place until they have completed all their treatments. Commonly used central lines are Hickman® and Mediport®. One end of the catheter is placed into a large vein in the chest. The other end is outside the body or attached to a small device just under the skin. The rate of administration for the drug is carefully controlled by a small, computerized machine. These larger catheters are used because chemotherapy is damaging to smaller veins. Only specially trained providers, using a special noncoring needle designed specifically for use with a port, can use a central line to get blood samples. Patients and their families are shown how to care for the catheter and keep it clean.

Chemotherapy is generally given in cycles, some call it 'rounds' or 'courses', according to a time schedule. A treatment period is followed by a recovery period, then another treatment period, and so on.

Palliative chemotherapy is the word used to describe treatment with chemotherapy which is intended to improve the quality of life of people who are coping with cancer that has spread and for which there is no hope of cure or complete remission.

Side Effects of Chemotherapy

The side effects of chemotherapy depend upon the types of drugs and the doses the person receives along with how the person's body reacts to the treatments. Every person does not get every side effect, and some people get few, if any. The severity of side effects also varies from person to person and treatment to treatment. It is important for people to understand their chemotherapy treatment, common side effects, as well as serious side effects that they need to report to their health care provider.

Chemotherapy works by destroying or damaging cells that divide rapidly, primarily cancer cells. Unfortunately, there are healthy cells in our bodies that also divide rapidly that may be affected by the chemotherapy. These include blood cells, which fight infection, help the blood to clot, and carry oxygen to all parts of the body. When blood cells are affected by chemotherapy, people are more likely to get infections, bruise or bleed easily, and have less energy. People receiving chemotherapy do not have strong immune systems and therefore can get sick very quickly if they develop an infection. CHRs and CHA/Ps can help families and friends of patients receiving chemotherapy to understand the importance of preventing infections such as colds, flu, and other contagious illnesses from being transmitted to the person receiving chemotherapy treatment. Frequent hand washing and avoiding coughing, sneezing, and passing germs from one person to another are important ways to protect against infection.

It is very important to tell the health care provider if a person receiving chemotherapy has an oral temperature of 100 degrees or higher.

Other fast-growing, normal cells most likely to be affected are cells in the digestive tract, reproductive system, and hair follicles. The most common side effects of chemotherapy include diarrhea, fatigue (tiredness), hair loss, mouth sores (stomatitis), nausea, and vomiting.

Some chemotherapy drugs affect the reproductive system. For women this may mean experiencing temporary or permanent menopause. Men should discuss how chemotherapy may affect their sperm count and their ability to father children in the future. Some men choose to do sperm banking so they have a choice about their fertility if their sperm count remains low after chemotherapy treatment. Side effects of chemotherapy which may affect men and women's fertility are not reliable ways of preventing pregnancy. Reliable methods of birth control need to be used to prevent pregnancy during chemotherapy treatment.

Cancer Treatments: *What to Expect*

Chemotherapy

Cancer Treatments: What to Expect

Radiation

Like surgery, radiation therapy is a local treatment. It affects cancer cells only in the treated area.

Radiation



Radiation therapy uses high-energy rays to kill cancer cells or keep them from growing and dividing. Radiation therapy is also called radiation treatment, radiotherapy, x-ray therapy, cobalt therapy, electron beam therapy, or irradiation.

Radiation therapy is an effective way to treat many kinds of cancer in almost any part of the body. For some people, radiation is the only kind of treatment needed. Radiation can also be given in combination with surgery or chemotherapy. Radiation can be given before surgery to shrink a tumor or after surgery to destroy any cancer cells that remain.

Like surgery, radiation therapy is a local treatment; it affects cancer cells only in the treated area. The intensity of the treatments is carefully controlled so the cancer will be harmed and the effects to normal tissue will be minimal.

Radiation can be given externally or internally.

External Radiation directs x-rays into the person's body from a machine placed a short distance away. External radiation treatments are usually administered five days a week for five to seven weeks on an outpatient basis. **People receiving external radiation are not radioactive during or after the treatment.**

Internal Radiation makes it possible to deliver a higher dose of radiation to the person's cancer using a radium implant. A small container of radioactive material is placed within or close to the cancerous tissue. The implant emits rays, therefore, people are hospitalized during treatment and visitors are restricted. Once the implant is removed, no radioactive material remains in the person.

People with prostate cancer may choose to be treated with radioactive "seeds" implanted into the prostate using a grid and needle through the perineum to transport the tiny seeds (about 70 of them) to the affected areas. These tiny seeds are left in place and do not have to be removed. As a precaution, patients should not hold young children on their laps until the radioactivity has worn off. Since these seeds can move, patients are asked to strain their urine for a week following the implant.

Even when a cure of the cancer is not possible, radiation therapy can still be helpful. Many people find the quality of their lives improved when radiation therapy is used to shrink tumors and reduce pressure, bleeding, pain, or other symptoms of cancer. This is called palliative treatment.

Side Effects of Radiation

The side effects of radiation therapy vary. In general, side effects depend upon which part of the body is being treated. For example, hair loss will only occur in the area being treated. Nausea and vomiting may accompany radiation treatment of the stomach area, and diarrhea may accompany radiation treatment of the bowel area. If the mouth and throat are treated, they may become very dry and sore and saliva may get very thick. The person may lose her or his sense of taste. If the person is receiving radiation therapy to a lung or the esophagus, she or he may have a severe sore throat causing difficulty in swallowing. The skin over the area being treated may become red and irritated.

Side effects usually start about two weeks after the start of treatment and peak in the fourth week, and may be intensified if the person is receiving chemotherapy at the same time. Generally, the side effects begin to go away 2 to 3 weeks after the last treatment, but may take several months to completely resolve. The treatment itself is painless.

Imagery

Healthy imagery may help provide a positive way for people to work with their treatment and healing journey. Choose words that support healing and positive imagery.

Think about any part of your body which you are concerned. Take a deep breath and breathe out thinking about letting go of any tension or any tightness you have in that part of your body. Breathe away any concern you have in that area. As you let go, allow your body to relax, feel your blood vessels get bigger allowing more oxygen to flow to that part of your body. Imagine healing elements flowing to that part of your body. By breathing in and out, taking nice slow relaxing breaths you are helping your body to heal. Breathe slowly and deeply and think of the following words, change them to make them your own to help your body heal...*“As I am relaxing, my body is making millions and millions of healthy strong new cells every minute. I imagine my body being bathed in sunlight and clear water, washing and dissolving the cancer cells and protecting the healthy cells. I see and feel my chemotherapy as a powerful cleanser, and radiation as beams of light removing cancer cells from my body while doing little harm to my healthy cells. My body is strong and can rapidly recover from surgery, radiation, or chemotherapy. My body welcomes the help of my medical treatment and works with it to free me of cancer.”*

Check Your Understanding answers from page 5-3:

1)T, 2)F, 3)F, 4)T, 5)T, 6)T, 7)T, 8)T, 9)F, 10)F

Cancer Treatments: What to Expect

Healthy Imagery

Cancer Treatments: *What to Expect*

Helpful Questions to ask about Medical Tests and Procedures

*Write down the
questions you
want to ask
your provider.
This will help
you remember
what you want
to know and
understand
about your
care.*



Helpful Questions to ask about Medical Tests and Procedures

The following questions can be used to help patients, families, CHA/Ps and CHRs understand common medical tests and procedures. Some times it is hard to know what to ask health care providers when they ask you if you have any questions.

Some people find it helpful to have the CHA/P, CHR, family member, or friend with them when they talk with their health care provider to be part of the discussion, to take notes, to help ask questions, or to listen. Bring a notebook to write down the questions you want to ask and what you learn. Ask your provider to explain any test results in ways you understand.

1. Why is this test or procedure being done?
2. Are there any reasons the test should not be done?
3. Does the patient need to sign a consent form?
4. Can the test be done if the patient is pregnant or breastfeeding?
5. If pregnant, should special precautions be taken?
6. How should the patient prepare for the test or procedure (i.e., can the patient eat before the test)?
7. Will there be any side effects or reactions?
8. How long will the test or procedure last?
9. Will there be any discomfort or pain?
10. Will the patient be hospitalized or be an outpatient?
11. Will the test or procedure require general or local anesthesia?
12. How should the patient take care of herself or himself afterwards?
13. Should someone drive the patient to and from the test or procedure if it is done as an outpatient?

Helpful Questions for Cancer Treatment



The following questions can be used to help patients and families understand common treatments for cancer.

- What is the specific cancer diagnosis?
- How advanced is the cancer? In other words, what is the stage of the cancer?
- What is the goal of treatment?
- What are the treatment choices?
- What treatment or combination of treatments is recommended? Why?
- What are the chances the treatment will be effective?
- How does each method of treatment work to treat the cancer?
- What are the short and long term risks of each treatment?
- What are the possible side effects of each treatment?
- What can be done before the treatment to avoid or decrease side effects?
- What symptoms or side effects should be reported to the health care provider immediately?
- Will the person have to change her or his normal activities during treatment?
- Are there any special precautions the person should take while on treatment?
- What tests, if any, will be done during and after treatment? What information will the test provide?
- Where will the treatment be given? Is it best for another person to drive the person to and from their treatment?
- How long will the treatment or treatments last?
- Will the person need to be away from home?
- What will be the follow-up plan after treatment is completed? Who will coordinate any follow-up care?
- How soon must the person decide about the treatment plan?
- Is a clinical trial recommended?

Cancer Treatments: *What to Expect*

Helpful Questions for Cancer Treatments

