

**Canterbury**

District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora o Waitaha

# ONCOLOGY WARD

## Patient Information



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# Oncology Ward

Patients from across the mid and top half of the South Island are admitted to the Oncology Ward. The ward is part of the oncology service. You may be admitted to the oncology ward if you have a cancer diagnosis and need chemotherapy or radiation treatment that requires a hospital stay or if you become unwell from your cancer or its treatment.

Being admitted to hospital can be very overwhelming. This information has been put together for both you and your family to introduce you to the ward and some of its routines. However, depending on your diagnosis and treatment plan you only need some or all of this information. This booklet is provided to compliment other information you may have been given. If you would like your own copy of this booklet please let the nursing staff know.

There is also useful information available by referring to our website [www.cdhb.govt.nz/oncology](http://www.cdhb.govt.nz/oncology) and other sites listed at the end of this booklet.

## General Information

### Your Rights

Your rights are guaranteed by law. This is known as the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumer Rights. There is a leaflet outlining your rights and how to complain should you wish to do so. There is also an interpreter service available to those who require it. Please let your nurse know if you would like the leaflet outlining your rights or access to the interpreter service.

### Ten Tips to Help make your Treatment Safer

1. Be actively involved in your healthcare.
2. More ears hear better (a support person with you can help reduce misunderstandings and misinterpretations). Feel free to write down your questions in advance and take notes.
3. Learn more about your condition or treatments by asking your doctor or nurse and by using other reliable sources of information.
4. Make sure you understand what will happen if you need a procedure or treatment.
5. Make sure you and your doctor agree on what will be done (your treatment plan).
6. Speak up if you have any questions or concerns. Writing your questions down as they come to mind can be helpful. The Cancer Society's "Questions to Ask" booklet can also be useful.
7. Let us know your habits (for example, special diet, supplements, natural health products, allergies).
8. Keep a list of all the medications you are taking.
9. Ask for your results of tests or procedures.
10. Before you leave hospital, ask your doctor and other health professionals how treatment is to continue when at home.

## Patient Privacy

When you are admitted to the Oncology Ward your name will go on the white board outside your room, above your bed and on the white board in the nurse's station. If you do not want your name to appear in these areas please let your nurse know.

Information about you is confidential. If you would like the staff to talk to family members/friends about what is happening to you please let us know as we need your permission to do this.

## Patient Identification

During your stay you will be asked your name, date of birth and your address many times. Your identification bracelet will also be checked. This is to ensure that the right person is receiving the right medication, treatment or procedure. Please wear your identification bracelet at all times.

## Hand Hygiene

Patients, family and visitors play an important role in helping prevent infections by practising hand hygiene. Please feel free to use the hand sanitising gel at the end of your bed or hand wash basin in your room. You may wish to thank your caregivers when they clean their hands and don't be afraid to give a gentle reminder if needed.

## Special Needs or Limitations

Please tell your nurse if you have any special needs or limitations we need to be aware of to help us care for you. If you have limited eyesight, are hard of hearing or unsteady on your feet, with your agreement we will display a sign by your bed to remind staff to offer you the right help and support.

## Falls Prevention

We want to reduce the number of falls that can happen while patients are in hospital.

We can achieve this with your help.

- Please let staff know if you have had slips, trips, stumbles or falls before
- Familiarise yourself with the ward environment
- Wear practical footwear
- Ensure you use your walking, hearing and visual aids
- Ask for assistance if you need it.

## Enduring Power of Attorney

An Enduring Power of Attorney (EPOA) is where a person over the age of 18 years appoints someone else to make decisions on their behalf should they become unable to. If you have an EPOA it is important you let us know in case the need arose and your medical team may need to liaise closely with your EPOA (and other people important to you). Staff will take a copy, place it in your clinical record and electronically note that you have an EPOA in place.

## Advance Directive or Advance Care Plans

Advance care planning is a way to help you talk about and share your thoughts and wishes about your future health care. Everyone is entitled to complete an Advance Care Directive or Plan if they wish. If you already have one, it is important you share it with us. If you want to learn more about this process, please discuss this with a member of your healthcare team, or visit [www.healthinfo.org.nz](http://www.healthinfo.org.nz).

## Consumer Feedback

In every clinical area of the hospital there are 'blue boxes' with consumer feedback forms located beside each box. Patients, family and visitors can write suggestions, give compliments or complaints about the service you are receiving. This feedback is important to us so we know what we are doing well and what we may need to work on.

## Further Information

For people receiving treatment in Haematology or Oncology further information is available at the following websites:

[www.cdhb.govt.nz/haematology](http://www.cdhb.govt.nz/haematology)

[www.cdhb.govt.nz/oncology](http://www.cdhb.govt.nz/oncology)

## Smoke Free

Smoking is a risk to your health and to the health of those around you. The CDHB has a smoke free policy and smoking is not permitted in any building or on the grounds. This applies to patients, staff and visitors. All patients will be asked if they smoke and advice will be provided if you do smoke. Smoking cessation support is available. Please ask for a Quit pack for yourself or for your family. Or visit [www.quit.org.nz](http://www.quit.org.nz).

## Valuables, Mail & Packages

You are encouraged to leave valuables at home. Valuables are kept on the ward at your own risk and the Canterbury District Health Board and ward accept no responsibility for loss or damage.

If you are expecting any mail while in hospital, if possible please redirect it "care of" to a family member or friend who will be visiting you on a regular basis. This is because we cannot always guarantee your mail and packages would be redirected free of charge. It also prevents any confusion for patients with similar names.

## Car Parking

Car parking at Christchurch Hospital is very limited. Allow extra time to find a park, especially if you want your visitor to be with you for a particular appointment or procedure.

There is concession parking available for patients. This is issued for one month at a time and you have to meet particular conditions to be eligible. If you would like more information, please talk to your nurse or the ward receptionist.

The Cancer Society operates a free shuttle service from their accommodation facilities to the Oncology Outpatient Service on a regular basis Monday to Friday.

# About the Oncology Ward

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## Ward Layout

The Oncology Ward has a total of 25 beds. There are 7 single rooms, two 5 bedded rooms and two 4 bedded rooms.

Each room/bed space has a television for use. All single rooms and the multi-bedded rooms have a telephone for incoming calls only. The single rooms are mainly used for people who require isolation for low immunity or infection reasons.

At the end of the ward there is a lounge with a television, fridge, hot drink machine, water cooler, books, desktop computer and magazines for your use.

Internet is supplied at a cost using a guest wireless service. Please ask the nurse or ward receptionist for further details.

A telephone with local area calling is available for public use in the lounge at the end of the ward. The ward is charged at business rates for these telephone calls so donations are gratefully received in the box next to the telephone. Dial one from this phone to get an outside line.

The Press newspaper can be purchased from the visiting newspaper round, 7:30am Monday to Saturday.

There are patient information leaflets and booklets, that you and your family members can help yourselves to. These can be found at the front of the ward, by the receptionist's desk. Understanding more about your condition (as and when you feel able) can help you know what to do to keep as well as possible.

## Contacting the Ward

- To contact the ward telephone 03 3640 640 and ask to be put through to the Oncology Ward.
- The nurse needs to leave your care to answer any telephone enquiries so please ask family/whanau and friends to keep these calls to a minimum. We recommend a spokesperson ring the ward and then liaise with family/friends.
- Privacy laws restrict information that can be given over the telephone.

Mobile phones can be used within the ward but not within one metre of electronic equipment.

## Visitors

Visiting hours are from 8am to 1pm and 3pm to 8:30pm.

Visitors are not to enter the ward if they have a cough, cold, gastro illness, flu symptoms or if they feel unwell. This is because you or other people in the ward may have low immunity and be susceptible to infection.

All visitors must wash their hands as they come into the ward and again before they enter the patients room. They can use either soap and water or the alcohol gel.

There is a rest period from 1pm to 3pm. Visiting is discouraged during this time to give you a rest.

We want to keep you and your visitors comfortable and safe. Please be aware of noise levels and other patients nearby. Some of the medications we are using are very hazardous so please supervise young children at all times and do not allow children or babies to sit on the floor.

The Oncology Ward has a flexible approach to visiting hours. Family/whanau of unwell patients are able to stay on the ward. A stretcher bed can be placed alongside your bed. Numbers staying overnight should be confirmed with the Nurse in Charge of the shift.

There are public toilets outside the ward areas. Please ask staff for directions. Fresh flowers are not permitted in some isolation rooms as they pose an infection risk once they are put in water.

## The Medical and Nursing Team

You will be under the care of the oncology consultant that you see when you come to the Oncology Department or are admitted to the oncology ward for the first time. This is the person you will see in the outpatient clinics and they have the overall responsibility for your care. If you have a medical oncology and a radiation oncology consultant, you will be under the care of the consultant most relevant to your current problem.

If you are admitted to the ward under medical oncology you will be seen by the consultant that is covering the ward at the time. Any changes in your care will be discussed with your own consultant. Doctors you will see include the consultant, registrar and house officer. The consultant does rounds on prearranged days, but may visit at other times also. The registrar and house officer will see you on other days. They will discuss any issues with the consultant if needed.

When you are admitted to the ward under the care of a radiation oncologist they will visit the ward once a week to review you. On a daily basis you will be seen by a registrar and/or a house officer.

If you have any concerns about your progress please discuss these with the doctors or the nurse managing your care.

The nursing team includes a Charge Nurse Manager, Clinical Nurse Specialist, Nurse Educator, Registered and Enrolled Nurses, and Hospital Aides. There is a 'Nurse in Charge' on every shift. Student Nurses also work on the ward toward the end of their training.

The nurses work eight hour shifts

- AM shift: 06:45am – 3:30pm
- PM shift: 2:30pm – 11:00pm
- Night shift: 10:30pm – 7:00am

Other important team members include the ward receptionists, allied health staff, cleaners, food services personnel and orderlies.

## Meals are at the following times

- Breakfast is at 8am
- Lunch is at 12:30pm
- Dinner is at 5:45pm

The food services personnel will visit you twice a day to take your menu request. Hot drinks are served after meals and a jug of fresh water is delivered daily.

## The Great Escape

While this cafeteria is provided for use by staff, patients and visitors are also welcome. Normal cafeteria fare is served at morning teas and lunch times while a hot meal is available in the evenings.

## Coffee Shop

The coffee shop is located in the main concourse and is available to everyone. This provides food, drinks, milkshakes, sweets, ice cream and coffee or tea.



## Tests/Observations

Your temperature, heart rate, breathing rate, blood pressure and oxygen saturations will be taken as needed during your stay.

You may require regular blood tests which are taken by trained staff during your stay.

## Complementary Therapy

“Complementary therapy” is a term which is used to refer to a wide range of health care practices and products which are used alongside (or complementary to) mainstream conventional treatments. “Alternative treatment” is a term which refers to health care practices and products which are used instead of (or as an alternative to) mainstream conventional medicine. Such therapies or treatments will range from being entirely safe to very dangerous, from possibly helpful to definitely unhelpful. Most complementary treatments will fit into the category of safe but of unknown effectiveness. Once it has been demonstrated that a therapy is effective and safe then it is no longer complementary therapy, it becomes mainstream treatment.

When making decisions about any of these types of therapies, it is important to be fully informed and to seek the advice of your doctor. Your doctor will have a good idea which of these treatments are safe and possibly helpful and will also know which of these treatments are ineffective or dangerous.

If you are already taking complementary medicines or supplements it is important to tell your medical team. This is because your immune response may be suppressed due to treatment making some complementary medicines unsafe to take (such as raw or powdered products) or they may interfere with how your treatment works.

Some examples of therapies that some also find helpful include relaxation therapy, yoga, meditation, aroma therapy, music therapy, tai chi and massage therapy. These can ease the emotional and physical impact of the disease and treatment side effects.

For further information please discuss with either the nurses or your medical team or visit the the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center Website [www.mskcc.org/cancer-care/integrative-medicine](http://www.mskcc.org/cancer-care/integrative-medicine).

## Side Effects

Treatment affects people in different ways. Specific side effects of the treatments that you will be receiving will be discussed with you prior to treatment being started and you can receive written information about each drug. If you would like to learn more about your condition there are many leaflets and recommended websites we can refer you to on request.

If there's something not quite right with you after your treatment we would like to hear about it as soon as possible. The sooner you tell us you are having problems the better.

## Support Services

# Support Services

There are many services that can be involved in your care. You may not meet all of these people but they are available if you require their support.

### Social Worker

The social worker may come and talk to you about any financial concerns that you may have. They will also be able to assist you with work and income benefits, organise medical certificates, travel reimbursements, other supports and arrange accommodation for families from out of town if required.

### Pharmacist

The pharmacist will provide information about the medicines you are taking. They will come and see you before you go home and go through all the medication you will need to take while at home. They will give you a medication card with all this information written on it if you require it.

### Physiotherapist

It is important that you maintain some physical activity while you are in hospital. Less physical activity can lead to decreased fitness, muscle weakness, poor posture, reduced balance and mobility. The physiotherapist will be able to provide you with gentle exercises to do while you are in hospital.

### Occupational Therapist

The occupational therapist will also see you if you need assessment and rehabilitation prior to going home. They may also do a home visit and provide equipment that will make things easier for you at home if required.

### Dietitian

The dietitian can assist with maintaining and improving good nutrition during your stay. Nutrition is important to maintain a healthy body weight, provide vitamins, minerals and nutrients for healing and to ensure good energy levels.

The dietitian will provide you with information about:

- safe food guidelines when your immunity is low
- how to choose from the menu and extra food and drink options available
- snacks and drinks that can be brought in by your family and friends.

The dietitian will also see you if you are at nutritional risk because of your disease or experiencing side effects from your treatment.

Before discharge the dietitian will review safe food guidelines for you to follow at home and arrange outpatient follow up if ongoing nutrition support is required.

## Speech Language Therapist

Speech Language Therapists (SLT) specialise in managing changes in swallowing and communication (speech clarity, voice and language). You will see a SLT if you experience difficulties in your ability to swallow and/or ability to communicate with others. The SLT can provide education, strategies and/or therapy to assist you with these difficulties.

## Maori Health Service

The Maori health team support the well-being of Te Iwi Māori. They provide awhi/support to turoro/patients and whanau/family while in the hospital.

## Chaplaincy Service

Chaplains are available for all patients and their family of all faiths. They offer their listening skills, support, encouragement, prayer and blessings. Please let staff know if you wish to see a chaplain.

## Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) Cancer Service

The AYA service provides co-ordinated, age appropriate care and psycho-social support for adolescents and young adults between 12-24 years of age who have been diagnosed with cancer.

## Palliative Care

Palliative care is the care provided to people whose illness is progressing and is no longer responding to active treatment. The focus is on symptom relief and control to improve the quality of life of the patient and their family. If needed a referral can be made to the palliative care service. An information leaflet is available about this service on request.

## Non-Hospital Organisations

There are services/organisations that provide ongoing support for you and your family. These include:

- Cancer Society – phone 0800 CANCER
- CanTeen (Supports 13-24 year olds and their siblings) – phone 0800 CANTEEN
- Wig services – subsidised wigs and turbans available
- Leukaemia and Blood Cancer New Zealand – phone 0800 15 10 15

## Going Home

Your stay in the Oncology Ward can vary in length from several days to weeks. If you have been in hospital for a while, going home can be a little overwhelming. If you are having regular treatment that requires you to stay in hospital, then you will be in and out of the ward over a period of time. If you have any specific concerns please talk them over with the nursing or medical staff.

If needed, referrals can be made to community services such as district nursing, domestic assistance and community palliative care. These services are also available for patients outside the Canterbury region.

Follow up appointments will be made for you. You will need to go to the Oncology Outpatient Department (see hospital map on page 11) for outpatient doctor appointments or outpatient chemotherapy or radiation treatment.

Before discharge, the team will go through the following with you:

- Your summary of your admission to hospital. We will also send a copy to your General Practitioner
- A copy of any community referral/s that have been requested for you
- Your prescriptions.

The Pharmacist may supply you with a medication card. This details the medication that you need to take, why you are taking it and when you need to take it.

### Your Prescription

You may be given a prescription at your time of discharge. It is important to get your prescription to the pharmacy as soon as possible to ensure you get your medications that day. Many pharmacies close between 5-5:30pm. Christchurch Hospital's Parkside Pharmacy, near the main entrance, closes 6pm Monday – Friday and is open 10am to 4pm Saturday & Sunday.

**N.B. Please note it is important that if your prescription has been faxed through to the pharmacy ahead of you going there, you must leave the original copy of the prescription with the pharmacist when you collect your medications (to meet legislative requirements).**

### Tips for Staying Well While at Home

- If you are feeling sick– take your antisickness tablets as prescribed
- Keep hydrated
- If you don't feel like eating bigger meals, have smaller portions more frequently
- Go for a walk if you feel like it
- Have a rest during the day
- Avoid people with coughs, colds, flu like symptoms or infections
- Take your medication as directed
- Pace yourself throughout the day
- **If you feel unwell, take your temperature and call in using the directions on your green immunosuppression card**

# Donations

## Oncology Ward Patient Comfort Fund

The Oncology Ward has a patient comfort fund which helps us purchase items to make your stay more comfortable. Our aim is to create a welcoming and more homely environment.

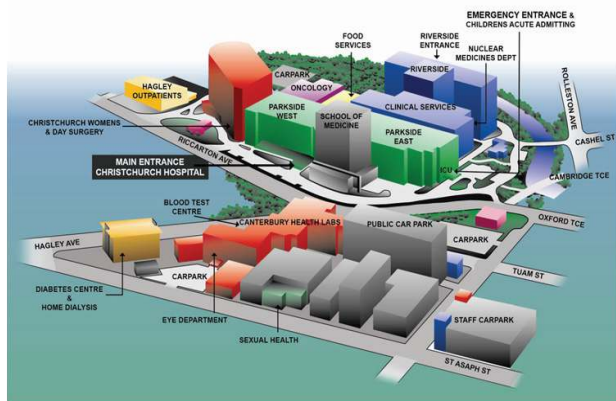
## Oncology Ward Nurse Education Fund

Ongoing education is an important part of nursing practice development with the aim of improving patient care. Our nurses attend conferences, courses and study days that are held locally and internationally. The nurses education fund helps support the nurses to attend.

## Oncology Service Trust Fund

The Oncology Service Trust Fund accepts donations for research, staff training, patient comfort or to improve facilities. Please discuss with a staff member what you would like your donation used for. Staff can also arrange for you to receive a receipt for tax credit claims (donations greater than \$5).

We are very grateful for any donations to these funds.



Map of the Hospital

## Resources

There are many written resources available to you. The Cancer Society and Leukaemia and Blood Cancer NZ have leaflets and booklets that are available to you and your family. These can be ordered or downloaded from their websites.

Listed below are websites that we recommend you use:

Leukaemia and Blood Cancer NZ  
Cancer Society of New Zealand  
Hospice New Zealand  
Advance Care Planning  
Health Info  
Macmillan cancer support  
CancerNet (NCI)

[www.leukaemia.org.nz](http://www.leukaemia.org.nz)  
[www.cancernz.org.nz](http://www.cancernz.org.nz)  
[www.hospice.org.nz](http://www.hospice.org.nz)  
[www.advancecareplanning.org.nz](http://www.advancecareplanning.org.nz)  
[www.healthinfo.org.nz](http://www.healthinfo.org.nz)  
[www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)  
[www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)