



General information for patients about supportive care

Rutherford
Cancer Centres

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How can the Rutherford Cancer Centre treatment team help?

As a patient with cancer, you will come across the term 'supportive care'. This is a phrase that encompasses all general and specialist services that may be required to support people with cancer and their carers (NICE 2004).

These services include:

- Information giving
- Psychological support
- Symptom control
- Social support
- Rehabilitation
- Complementary therapies
- Spiritual support
- Palliative care
- End-of-life and bereavement care

If you require access to any of these services, the Rutherford Cancer Centre treatment team is available to support you and the people who care for you throughout your treatment. They will also provide you with the means to manage your own care when you have finished your treatment.

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People can experience a wide range of emotions when undergoing treatment. Whatever you are feeling, it may help to talk to someone.

The treatment team is available to talk with you about your feelings, and to answer any questions you may have about your cancer or the proposed treatment. If they can't answer all your questions, they can put you in touch with someone who can. You can ask the treatment team about your diagnosis and condition, as well as your treatment plan and what is involved.

The treatment team can:

- Provide you, your family and your carers with general information about treatment and the expected side effects you might have
- Give you the opportunity to talk through specific information about your treatment and help you understand your particular cancer and its treatment
- Provide a confidential setting for you to discuss any concerns or questions you may have regarding your treatment
- Offer further advice and information, or if you prefer to find this for yourself, provide you with a list of reliable websites and other resources to use
- Provide strong links with other healthcare professionals involved in your care, including doctors, nurses and other allied health professionals
- Access any practical support you may need, putting you in touch with different services in the community that may be useful to you, such as the community nursing service, dieticians and counsellors

Good to know:

Our treatment team can provide access to a range of different services that may be useful to you, such as the community nursing service, dieticians and counsellors.



The Rutherford
Cancer Centres

Holistic Needs Assessment

We recognise that people with cancer often do not raise issues important to them, such as difficulties with relationships, symptoms and physical concerns, feelings and emotions, to list just a few.

As a patient, you are therefore offered the opportunity to complete a Holistic Needs Assessment, which is a simple list to highlight the most important issues for you.

This helps us to develop a care and support plan that is tailored to your needs. We recognise that these needs can change at different points in your cancer journey, so more than one assessment may be carried out (e.g. a new Holistic Needs Assessment at the end of your treatment) if required. This assessment is not compulsory and not having the assessment will not affect your care.

What is involved in a Holistic Needs Assessment?

The Holistic Needs Assessment gives you a chance to think about your concerns and discuss possible solutions. It usually has three parts:

- 1) The completion of a simple questionnaire
- 2) A discussion with a member of the treatment team
- 3) The development of a written care plan

Benefits of having a Holistic Needs Assessment

If you have a Holistic Needs Assessment, it means we can provide you with any information and support with the concerns you have identified. A Holistic Needs Assessment can help you prioritise your most important concerns, and your healthcare professional can refer you to other services if this would help. It can also help you to plan ahead, from diagnosis, through treatment, and to life after treatment.

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You may want to ask yourself these questions when completing your Holistic Needs Assessment (Macmillan 2015):

- Is anything bothering you about your relationships with family or friends that could be related to your cancer?
- Are members of your family coping with knowing you have cancer?
- Would you like to know more about local services, support groups or helplines?
- Do you need advice on things like diet or stopping smoking?
- Would you like advice on how to be more physically active?
- Are you confused by anything that is happening with your treatment or follow-up care? Is there anything you would like explained to you?
- Do you need help with things like finances, work or education?
- Are you concerned about returning to work after treatment?
- Are you worried about what the future might bring?
- Do you feel your quality of life could be improved?
- Do you know what signs and symptoms to look out for in case the cancer comes back?

If you would like to have a family member present for your discussion, let a member of your treatment team know. Supportive care in cancer is the prevention and management of the adverse effects of cancer and its treatment. This includes the management of physical and psychological symptoms and side effects across the whole of the cancer experience, from diagnosis, through anti-cancer treatment, to post-treatment care. Enhancing rehabilitation, secondary cancer prevention, survivorship and end-of-life care are all integral to Supportive Care. (MASCC 2015)

References

National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) 2004: Improving Supportive and Palliative Care for Adults with Cancer

Macmillan.org: Planning your care and support: Having a Holistic Needs Assessment

Your wellbeing

Emotional wellbeing

At the Rutherford Cancer Centres, we know the diagnosis of cancer, combined with the side effects of treatment, can be a huge upheaval and dramatically affect how you feel.

We encourage you to come to us at any time during the course of your treatment if you feel overwhelmed, unable to cope or just 'not yourself'. It can be easy to feel swept up in events, so sometimes just taking time to talk about your emotions can be a great help. Further advice and support can be arranged, if necessary.

We are here for you

If, at any time, you have concerns or worries, you can speak to a member of the treatment team in confidence.

We endeavour to provide patient information that is informative and supportive to those using our services. We also welcome feedback on our patient information.

Please talk to a member of the treatment team or write to us if you have any suggestions or feedback on the information you have received.

Good to know:

Our care team can provide access to a range of different services that may be useful to you, such as the community nursing service, dieticians and counsellors.



Rutherford Cancer Centres

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