

# Stronach Regional Cancer Centre

PATIENT INFORMATION



**SOUTHLAKE**  
REGIONAL HEALTH CENTRE

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# INTRODUCTION

If you are reading this, it is likely that your world has suddenly changed. You, a friend or family member have been told that they have cancer. A cancer diagnosis may affect many aspects of your life: physical, financial, emotional, occupational, and spiritual. If you have been diagnosed with cancer, it is normal to feel scared, anxious or unsettled. Our team is here to help.

The New Patient Information Booklet was written with the help of patients, families and healthcare providers. We hope that this booklet will help you know what to expect and how to prepare for your appointments and treatments. When patients and families are informed, they can be true partners in their care.

As you review the information, you may think of more questions. Please make a list of your questions and bring them to your appointments. Everyone on our team wants to make sure you have the information you need, so don't be afraid to ask questions. This booklet is a resource for you and your family; and is not meant to replace the care or information provided by the team.

## THE STRONACH REGIONAL CANCER CENTRE (SRCC)

The Stronach Regional Cancer Centre opened in 2010 to serve the 1.2 million people of Newmarket and the surrounding region. SRCC is ranked one of the top performing regional cancer programs by Ontario Health (Cancer Care Ontario).

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

The main phone number for the Cancer Centre is 905-830-5800.

This phone number is monitored Monday to Friday (except holidays) between 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Please listen carefully to the prompts to reach the correct person or department.

For after-hours symptom management support, please call 1-877-681-3057.

## APPOINTMENT CHANGES

If you need to cancel or change an appointment, please contact us as soon as possible, preferably 48 hours in advance, at 905-830-5800, and follow the prompts.

## CANCER CENTRE LAYOUT

The cancer centre can be a little confusing to get around when you first come to your appointments. If you are ever having trouble, just ask any staff member or a volunteer in a blue jacket and they will be more than happy to help you.

- Level G – Radiation Therapy Treatment
- Lobby Level – Main entrance, Welcome Centre and the Patient and Family Resource Centre
- Level 1 – Clinic and Lab Appointments
- Level 2 – Systemic Treatment
- Level 3 – Administrative Offices

## **DIRECTIONS AND PARKING**

The main entrance to the Cancer Centre is through the sliding glass doors off of the ground level of the parking garage. Parking is available on the visitors' levels of the parking garage. To save money, you can buy a multi-day discounted parking pass (H-Pass). The pass includes in-and-out privileges and expires after one year. To get the most up-to-date parking information and rates, visit the hospital website at [southlake.ca](https://southlake.ca).

Free parking is available to veterans with a valid Veterans Affairs Health Benefits Card. Veterans can visit the Parking Office before they leave the hospital to have their parking ticket validated after each visit.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

If you need help getting to and from your appointments, the Canadian Cancer Society has a volunteer driver program called Wheels of Hope (WOH). A volunteer driver can pick you up and drive you to and from the Cancer Centre. In order to use this program, you will need a referral from your nurse or social worker. Please note there is an annual registration fee for this service.

## **SOUTHLAKE PATIENT CONNECT PORTAL**

You can access your Southlake health care information online. You can view your health records, appointments, lab results and notes from your clinical visits. You can sign up and view your records anytime. Registering for the Patient Connect Portal is required for attending virtual appointments with your doctor or nurse practitioner.

To find out more and complete the registration go to [southlake.ca/patient-connect](https://southlake.ca/patient-connect) or review the brochure located in your information package folder.

## **COST OF SERVICES/INSURED SERVICES**

When you register for your appointment at the Cancer Centre, it is important that you tell us about any healthcare insurance coverage you have. There are some medications that you may have to pay for if they are not covered by insurance. We have a Drug Reimbursement Specialist who may be able to help you to get funding for these medications.

## **CHANGE OF INFORMATION**

Please let us know at each visit if any of your contact information has changed:

- Your name or the way you wished to be addressed
- Your preferred pronouns
- Your home address
- Your telephone numbers
- Your family doctor or other doctors you have seen
- Your emergency contact person's name and phone number

## KEEPING YOU SAFE

- Every time you register at the Welcome Centre, you will receive a wrist band with your personal identification information. To ensure you receive your treatment safely, before any tests, procedures or medications, make sure your healthcare team checks your wrist band or asks you to state your name and date of birth.
- To prevent falls, bring any mobility aids (ie. walker, cane) and non-slip footwear with you to your appointments. Ask for help before getting up or if you cannot reach your belongings.
- Due to the cancer treatments, your immune system may be weaker and you may be at higher risk for infection. To protect you and your family from infection, it is important to:
  - Wear a mask in crowded areas (ie. Emergency Department, shopping malls, grocery stores)
  - Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or hand sanitizer
  - Avoid others who are sick
  - Ask your healthcare provider to clean their hands, if they have not already done so
- If you need to go to the Emergency Department, it is important for you to notify the staff that you are a patient of the Cancer Centre. This is so that your risk of exposure to other sick people can be minimized.

## QUITTING SMOKING

Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do to help your cancer treatment work better. You can talk to your care team about how to quit or reduce smoking and how to stay smoke-free. Our team will refer you to a support program or service that meets your needs and goals. They will also connect you with resources and information.

To learn more, visit [www.cancercareontario.ca/en/Quitting-Smoking](http://www.cancercareontario.ca/en/Quitting-Smoking)

Southlake is a smoke-free facility. Smoking, including e-cigarettes (vaping), is not allowed anywhere on hospital grounds.

## SCENT-FREE

Scented products may affect patients, employees and visitors who have asthma or allergies. Patients on chemotherapy may be more sensitive to these smells. Do not wear perfume or other scented products when coming to the Cancer Centre.

## INTERPRETERS

If the language you speak is not English, we can arrange to have an interpreter for you and your family. Please let your care team know.

## **YOUR SYMPTOMS MATTER – TELLING US HOW YOU ARE FEELING**

Each time you come to an appointment to see your doctor or nurse practitioner (including weekly review while on radiation therapy treatments), you will need to complete the **Your Symptoms Matter** questionnaire. This questionnaire will tell your healthcare team about how you are feeling. When your healthcare team knows about your symptoms, they can give you treatments and advice to help you manage them.

At the Cancer Centre, you can complete the Your Symptoms Matter questionnaire at the kiosks in the waiting areas. Volunteers will help you get started and will remind you each time. You can also complete the questionnaire on your personal devices or home computer within 24 hours of your appointment.

To access the questionnaire, visit the website: [isaac.ontariohealth.ca](https://isaac.ontariohealth.ca). You will need your health card to complete the assessment.

## **CLINICAL TRIALS AND RESEARCH**

Clinical trials are research studies to test new procedures, drugs, or equipment. SRCC patients are involved in many different trials. Trials are important for discoveries that can improve the quality of life for patients and can lead to better treatments. If you have the type of cancer that is part of a study, you may be given information and asked to consider signing up. It is up to you if you want to be part of a clinical trial. If you do not want to, it will not change the quality of your care.

## **YOUR VOICE MATTERS – TELL US HOW WE ARE DOING**

Your Voice Matters is a questionnaire that lets you share your experiences about your most recent in-person or virtual appointment. We value your feedback. It helps us improve care for our patients and caregivers.

To access the questionnaire, visit the website: [isaac.ontariohealth.ca/yvm/cancer](https://isaac.ontariohealth.ca/yvm/cancer). The questionnaire can be completed once every 30 days. You will need your health care to complete the questionnaire, however your responses will be confidential and will not impact your care.

# SYSTEMIC TREATMENTS

Systemic treatments are medications that travel through your blood to most areas of your body to treat diseases. Chemotherapy and immunotherapy are two kinds of systemic therapy that may be part of your cancer treatment at SRCC.

## CHEMOTHERAPY

Chemotherapy is a cancer treatment that uses drugs to damage and stop cancer cells from growing. Chemotherapy drugs come in different forms. Some are taken as a pill at home; others are given intravenously (into a vein, IV) or injected with a needle.

The chemotherapy drugs that are prescribed by your oncologist affect all cells that are growing quickly, not just cancer cells. Normal fast growing cells such as hair follicles, the cells that line your mouth or gut, and blood cells are also affected. That is why you get treatment side effects. The normal healthy cells can heal and regrow better than cancer cells. The time between treatments, also known as cycles, gives time for your normal cells to heal.

## IMMUNOTHERAPY

Immunotherapy is different than chemotherapy because it uses your own immune system to fight cancer. Immunotherapy can sometimes be called biotherapy. Immunotherapy may be prescribed alone or together with chemotherapy.

## YOUR SYSTEMIC THERAPY APPOINTMENT SCHEDULE

Most people having systemic therapy need to come to the Cancer Centre two days in a row for each treatment. The first appointment will be at the outpatient clinic (Level 1). You will have your blood work, complete Your Symptoms Matter, and meet with your medical oncologist or nurse practitioner. You will have to wait about 1.5 hours for your blood test results before you see your oncologist. The main purpose of this visit is to make sure that you are well enough to safely go ahead with your systemic treatment. If your blood results are good and you are feeling well enough, on the second day you will have your treatment on Level 2, or restart your oral chemotherapy at home.



## **PREPARING FOR INTRAVENOUS (IV) TREATMENT**

You will be scheduled to attend a pre-chemotherapy teaching class before you start your treatment. The class is taught by a nurse and will help you and your family to prepare for treatment and know what to expect.

When you come for your treatments, come wearing comfortable, loose-fitting clothing. You are also encouraged to dress in layers because you may feel warm or cool at times during your treatment. You cannot leave the systemic unit while you have the intravenous drugs running.

Other items that might make you feel more comfortable are an extra pair of socks, your own music, books, games or wired headphones to connect to the entertainment system to help pass the time. Pillows and warm blankets can be provided while you receive treatment.

## **MEDICATION REFILLS**

Before the end of your appointment, please make sure you have enough medication to last until your next visit with the doctor. If you need a refill, please call your community pharmacy and ask that they fax a prescription refill request to the Cancer Clinic at 905-952-3051.

It can take up to **7 DAYS TO PROCESS A REFILL REQUEST**. For your safety, it is best to use the same community pharmacy for all of your prescriptions.

# RADIATION THERAPY PLANNING AND TREATMENT

Radiation therapy is a cancer treatment that uses high energy x-rays to damage and stop cancer cells from growing. The radiation cannot tell the difference between cancer cells and normal cells, which is why you may get side effects related to the treatment area. Normal cells can heal and regrow, so your side effects will get better over time.

Your radiation oncologist will prescribe a treatment schedule that is best for you. Patients who come for radiation will have a Pre-Radiation Patient Assessment (PRPA) teaching appointment with a radiation therapist, where you will get information about what to expect during treatment.

## **RADIATION THERAPY PLANNING**

Your first appointment will be a Computed Tomography (CT) Simulation. The radiation team will determine your treatment position and take images to accurately outline your treatment area. You may also receive tiny permanent tattoo marks that will be used daily to position you for treatment. The tattoos look like a small freckle.

## **RADIATION TREATMENT**

The first radiation treatment appointment will be the longest (30-45 minutes) and the following appointments are usually 15-30 minutes. The radiation therapist and other members of the team will check all the details of your treatment plan before you get any radiation treatment and will be verified daily.

Getting a radiation treatment is like having an x-ray. You won't see or feel anything, and you won't become radioactive. During treatment, the radiation therapists will not be in the room but they can see and hear you at all times.

## **RADIATION TREATMENT REVIEW**

You will see your radiation oncologist for a Radiation Treatment Review once a week while you are on treatment. Please remember to complete Your Symptoms Matter before your appointment. Write down any questions that you have for your doctor and bring them to your review appointment.

# SUPPORTIVE CARE

The supportive care teams at SRCC help patients improve their quality of life at any stage of cancer. They can help you with pain, physical, social, psychological, emotional and practical problems. These teams consist of physicians, social workers, dietitians, nurses and psychiatrists. There are two teams that make up the supportive care services:

- 1) Psychosocial Oncology
- 2) Palliative Care

Psychosocial oncology is a whole-person approach to cancer care that addresses a range of social, emotional, psychological and functional needs. The Psychosocial Oncology team helps people affected by cancer at any stage through the Psychosocial Assessment Clinic, individual counselling sessions or group support programs. Common concerns addressed by this team include struggling to cope with a diagnosis, fear of cancer returning, anxiety, depression or access to community resources for patients, families and/or care partners.

Palliative care is a team approach to care that is meant for anyone living with a life-limiting illness. Many people think it is only about care at the end of life, but palliative care is much broader. The Palliative Care team is dedicated to helping patients access ongoing treatments to manage symptoms and extend life, arrange home care and hospice services and determine your goals of care.

Ask any member of your healthcare team about which program or service may help you and how to get a referral.

# WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOUR TREATMENT FINISHES

You and your oncologists will decide on a treatment plan that is best for you and for your type and stage of cancer. You may have a set period of treatment cycles that may last several months, or you may have ongoing types of treatments that last for many years.

After finishing treatment or between different types of treatments, you may feel relieved, but you may also have persistent physical and emotional challenges to navigate. These may include anxiety, trouble coping with your new normal, managing relationships or getting back to work. Your oncology team will develop a plan for your follow up care. They will give you information and resources to help you cope physically and emotionally as you adjust to life after cancer treatment.

Support programs are available at the Cancer Centre, in the community and online to help you at all stages of your treatment and after treatment is over. Your primary care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) is a very important part of your continuing care after cancer treatments are over. If you do not have a primary care provider, you can call 811 to help find a provider that is accepting new patients.

# PATIENT RESOURCES

## PATIENT AND FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE

The Patient and Family Resource Centre provides patients and families educational resources that offer support through the cancer experience. The Resource Centre is located beside the Welcome Centre on the lobby level of the Cancer Centre. At the resource centre, you have access to cancer-specific educational resources, fiction novels, a quiet lounge space, and computer & internet access.

The Patient and Family Resource Centre is staffed by volunteers Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The information provided by the Resource Centre is not a substitute for talking with your healthcare team.

## THE QUIET ROOM

The Cancer Centre offers a Quiet Room for patients, family, staff and volunteers. It is located on the first level, near the main elevators. The room is available for quiet reflection, prayer and meditation.

## THE HEALING GARDEN

The Healing Garden is located on the west side of the cancer centre. You can access it from the ground level of the Cancer Centre. The garden has a fountain and benches and is a quiet, calm place to spend time while waiting between appointments.

## HEAD COVERINGS FOR HAIR LOSS

Some cancer treatments can cause thinning or loss of hair. Your hair will usually grow back after the end of treatment, and sometimes even sooner. Ask your oncologist if you have any questions or concerns about possible hair loss from your treatment.

There is a selection of new, free, knitted hats and fabric head coverings in the Level 2 waiting area in the Cancer Centre. A volunteer will be happy to help you look for something you like. Many people choose not to cover their heads if they lose their hair, but it is recommended to keep your head covered if you are outside to protect it from the sun.

### **Before you buy a wig:**

If you have an extended health insurance policy, your policy may cover you for all or part of the cost of the wig. You will need a prescription from your doctor before you buy it.

## **FOOD SERVICES**

The Stronach Regional Cancer Centre does not have its own cafeteria or food outlets. You can bring your own food and snacks in case you get hungry during your visit.

If you want to buy food:

- C&B is the closest to the Cancer Centre, on the second floor around the corner from the parking garage
- Tim Horton's has two locations in the main hospital building; one on Level 1 by the East entrance and another on Level 2
- Subway restaurant is located in the main hospital on Level 1
- The cafeteria is located in the main hospital on Level 1

## **RETAIL SERVICES**

There is a gift shop on Level 1 of the main hospital. You can buy toiletries, cards, gifts, snacks, magazines and even clothes. There are also different vendors each day selling everything from clothing to jewelry.

# COMMUNITY RESOURCES

A diagnosis of cancer affects you and your whole family. The volunteers in the Patient and Family Resource Centre are happy to help you and your family find information about programs close to you. Reliable information is also available at the websites below:

**Canadian Cancer Society** (for all cancer types) - [www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca)

**Cancer and Work Canada** - [www.cancerandwork.ca](http://www.cancerandwork.ca)

**Canadian Virtual Hospice** - [www.virtualhospice.ca](http://www.virtualhospice.ca)

**Gilda's Club Cancer Support (Toronto)** - [gildasclubtoronto.org](http://gildasclubtoronto.org)

**Gilda's Club Cancer Support (Simcoe)** - [gildasclubsimcoemuskoka.org](http://gildasclubsimcoemuskoka.org)

**Look Good Feel Better Workshops** - [lgfb.ca/en/](http://lgfb.ca/en/)

**Ontario Caregiver Organization** - [ontariocaregiver.ca/](http://ontariocaregiver.ca/)

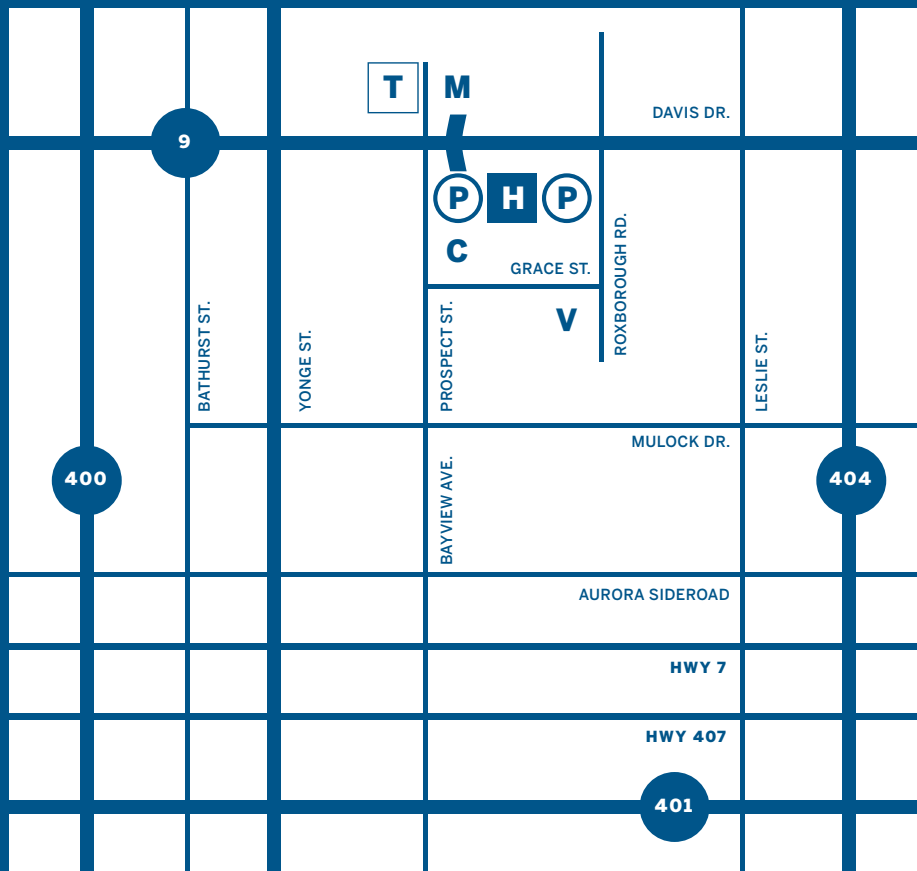
**Ontario Health (Cancer Care Ontario)** - [cancercareontario.ca](http://cancercareontario.ca)


**Wellspring** - [wellspring.ca/](http://wellspring.ca/) **Online programs** - [wellspring.ca/online-programs/](http://wellspring.ca/online-programs/)

## York Region and Surrounding Area Community Supports

- **Doane House (Newmarket)** - [www.doanehospice.org/](http://www.doanehospice.org/)
- **Hospice Georgina** - [www.hospicegeorgina.com/](http://www.hospicegeorgina.com/)
- **Hope House (Richmond Hill/Aurora)** - [www.hopehousehospice.com/](http://www.hopehousehospice.com/)
- **Matthews House (Alliston)** - [www.matthews.house](http://www.matthews.house)

## HOW TO FIND US



- V** Southlake Village,  
640 Grace Street
- M** Medical Arts Building,  
581 Davis Drive
- H** Southlake Regional  
Health Centre
- C** Stronach Regional  
Cancer Centre
- T** The Tannery Mall,  
465 Davis Drive
- P** Parking
-  Bridge over Davis Drive – accessible from P3 of the  
Parking Garage and Level 3 of the Medical Arts Building.

### Stronach Regional Cancer Centre

Tel: 905-830-5800  
596 Davis Drive  
Newmarket, ON L3Y 2P9

[southlake.ca](http://southlake.ca)