

Information Sheet:

Cancer Treatment & Communicating with your Health Care Team

An important part of health care is a good relationship between you and your health care team. Communicating well with each other is important so that your needs are met.

Cancer treatment is often complex, which means you will have more than one doctor and many other health care professionals involved in your care. You may get information from many sources so it is a good idea to ask for the name and contact details of the main person looking after your care. It saves time and trouble when one person keeps track of your situation.

How can I manage communication with my healthcare team during my treatment?

Remember, it is hard to listen well and understand when you are anxious or afraid. Even if the person explains things clearly, you may not hear or remember all that is said. It might be helpful to:

- ❖ Make a list of your questions and take this with you to your appointments. Don't be ashamed to ask these questions. There is no such thing as a "dumb" question.
- ❖ Take notes to help recall what was said, or
- ❖ Ask if you can tape record your appointment for later review.
- ❖ Ask for the information to be written down so you can read it later.
- ❖ You may like to take a family member or friend to your appointments. They can remind you of questions you want to ask and help you remember what was said. Having someone there also helps your family know what is happening. You may want their help in making decisions.
- ❖ If terms are used that you do not understand, ask the health professional to explain them to you.
- ❖ Try to state as clearly as you can any changes in your body. Make notes or keep a journal so you can report these.
- ❖ Talk over your concerns. Discuss **ALL** your concerns. Something you think is minor could affect your treatment.

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- ❖ Ask for contact numbers and find out when is the best time to call if you have any questions.
- ❖ When you get instructions, write them down or ask for a written copy. Make sure you understand them before you leave the appointment.

Your health care team should take your questions and concerns seriously. They should be interested in you and not make you feel rushed. If you feel rushed, explain that you need them to slow down.

We encourage you to speak with your healthcare team if you have any concerns about any part of your treatment and care.

We welcome feedback at:

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Bairnsdale Regional Health Service is located on the traditional land of the Gunai Kurnai people.

My team is **BRHS**