



EXPLAINING DIFFERENT TYPES OF TREATMENT

What is surgery?

- Surgery is an operation where doctors remove the cancer by carefully cutting the tumour (lump) out of the person's body with a special knife or with a laser.
- The person with the tumour goes to the hospital for the surgery, and has special medicine so that he or she doesn't feel any of the surgery.
- A biopsy is done when a doctor removes part or all of a lump (tumour). Another doctor, called a pathologist, looks at the cells through a microscope to figure out whether the cells are normal, or if they are cancerous.
- Sometimes the doctors have to take away a part of the body, such as a breast or certain bones, if there is cancer there.

What is radiation therapy?

- Radiation therapy is the careful use of x-rays or rays from other sources to make the bad cells go away.
- The rays can come from a machine or from special materials placed in or near the cancer.

What is chemotherapy?

- Chemotherapy uses special medicines or drugs to treat cancer.
- These special medicines may be given as pills to take, by special injections, or by Intravenous (IV) into the body.
- The drugs are carried by the blood to each cell of the body, to reach cancer cells wherever they are.

What is stem cell transplantation treatment?

- The use of stem cells found in either the bone marrow or the blood to fix stem cells destroyed by high doses of chemo and/or radiation therapy.
- Stem cells (from self or from donors, often family members) are given through an IV line.

What is hormone therapy?

- Hormone therapy adds, blocks, or removes hormones from the body to slow or stop the growth of some cancers.
- Hormone therapy is given as a pill, through injection, or skin patch, or sometimes surgery to remove glands that make specific hormones.

(Adapted from Reaching out to your Children When Comes to Your Family. Slakov, J., (2007) BC Cancer Agency, Vancouver)

This is part of a series of FACT Sheets developed by the Patient Family and Counselling Departments, BC Cancer Agency. For further contact information, please access our provincial website at: www.bccancer.bc.ca