



## Palliative Care Team: Purple Team

You have been referred to the Palliative Care Team at the Durham Regional Cancer Centre. The Palliative Care Team includes palliative care doctors, a telephone support nurse and a clerk. Other members of your healthcare team include your family member or care partner, your family doctor and Ontario Health atHome.

The Palliative Care Team works with you, your family member/care partner and your healthcare team to:

- Manage your physical or emotional symptoms.
- Understand what is important to you now and in the future.
- Confirm you know who your Substitute Decision Maker is.
- Encourage you to talk to your Substitute Decision Maker about what is important to you.
- Plan for the care you need at home.

The Palliative Care Team is divided into 2 teams (Purple and Green). **You will be cared for by the Purple Team.** You will see the same team of doctors and nurses each time you come for an appointment. This helps us get to know you and the needs you have.

We let your family doctor know if we make any changes to your medications. Call your family doctor with concerns or medication reorders for other health problems. We may ask you to call your family doctor or another specialist about your concerns or for a medication reorder.

### Calling the Palliative Care Team

You can call the Palliative Care Team from Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 4pm. Your phone call may be answered by an answering machine. Leave a message and include your name, health card number and the reason for your call. Non-urgent messages will be answered within 24 hours.

Call the secretary at 905-576-8711 extension 33931 if you:

- Need to make or change an appointment.
- Need a refill on a medication we prescribed for you.

If you have a symptom that is not well managed or you have a new symptom:

1. Call your visiting nurse from Home and Community Care Support Services.

Or

2. Call the Palliative Care Team.

Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 4 pm, except on holidays, call 905-576-8711 extension 33947 to talk to the Telephone Support Nurse.

Monday to Friday from 4 pm to 8:30 am and all day on weekends and holidays,  
call Lakeridge Health at 905-576-8711 extension 33200. **Ask the operator to  
contact a palliative care doctor from the Purple Team.** A palliative care doctor  
will call you back.

We call Home and Community Care Support Services if you need changes to your  
medications or care. A palliative care doctor will visit you in your home if needed.

### **Your Symptoms Matter (YSM) Questionnaire**

Complete the YSM questionnaire each time you have an appointment with a doctor  
from the cancer centre. Complete it within 24 hours of your appointment. This  
questionnaire lets you tell us about the cancer related symptoms you have at the time of  
your appointment. This helps us talk about the symptoms that are a problem for you.  
Tell us if you have these symptoms at other times or if you have cancer-related  
symptoms not on the questionnaire. We may ask you about other symptoms too.

Complete the YSM questionnaire:

- During echeck-in on your MyChart account. You can access your MyChart  
account on a personal computer or mobile device. You still need to check-in at a  
computer in the cancer centre when you arrive for your appointment. This lets  
your healthcare team know you are in the cancer centre.

Or

- In the cancer centre at a check-in computer. It takes about 3 to 5 minutes for you  
to check in and complete the YSM questionnaire.

### **Advance care planning**

Advance care planning allows you to think about what is important to you. This includes  
what kind of health and personal care you want in the future. Your health can change at  
any time. Do you know who would speak for you if you were not mentally capable of  
making decisions about your care and treatment? Everyone in Ontario has an automatic  
family member Substitute Decision Maker (SDM). An SDM is the person(s) asked to  
make decisions for your health and personal care if you are not mentally capable of  
decision-making. Go to the [advancecareplanningontario.ca](http://advancecareplanningontario.ca) website to see the list of  
automatic family member SDMs. You can decide to give this role to a different person  
by completing a [Power of Attorney for Personal Care \(POA PC\)](#) document.

In Ontario, the law requires your healthcare team to get consent before giving you care  
or treatment. You have the right to accept or refuse care or treatment.

To be mentally capable of making care and treatment decisions, you need to understand:

- Information about the care and treatment offered by your healthcare team.
- The impact of any care or treatment decision you make.

You may not be mentally capable of making care and treatment decisions if you are:

- Unconscious
- Very drowsy
- Depressed
- Having symptoms not well managed

You can be mentally capable of making some care and treatment decisions but not others. If you are not mentally capable of making a decision, your Substitute Decision Maker(s) (SDMs) will be asked to make a decision on your behalf. We cannot predict if or when your SDM(s) may need to make care and treatment decisions on your behalf.

**Go to these websites for more information:**

- [advancecareplanningontario.ca](http://advancecareplanningontario.ca)
- [planwellguide.com](http://planwellguide.com)
- [publications.gov.on.ca](http://publications.gov.on.ca) and search for the Power of Attorney for Personal Care booklet.

## **Supports at the cancer centre**

### **The Psychosocial Oncology Team**

Living with a diagnosis of cancer can be difficult and overwhelming. You and your family member/care partner will have questions and concerns. It may be helpful to talk to a social worker or a dietitian from our Psychosocial Oncology Team.

#### Registered Dietitian

A registered dietitian specializes in nutrition counselling and education. A registered dietitian can help you manage the symptoms you have to keep you strong and stop you from losing weight.

Questions you may have for a registered dietitian:

- “I am not hungry. I am losing weight. How can I improve my appetite?”
- “I have symptoms such as nausea, constipation and taste changes. What can I do with my diet to help manage my symptoms?”
- “Is there any food I can eat to help increase my energy?”
- “I have heard about nutritional supplements. Should I drink them?”
- “I have a hard time drinking water. What other fluids can I drink?”

### Speech-Language Pathologist

Swallowing problems can be caused by your cancer diagnosis and affect your ability to eat. You may also have changes to your voice and ability to talk.

A speech-language pathologist can help you by:

- Answering questions or concerns.
- Offering information on how to manage swallowing problems.
- Finding foods and liquids you can safely eat and drink.
- Referring you to other members of the healthcare team if needed.

### Social Worker

A social worker offers support and information to help answer your questions. Social workers are trained in counselling techniques to help you solve problems, make decisions and improve your feelings of wellbeing. If you are having a hard time with your emotions, you are not alone. These emotions can be temporary with the right support and treatment. Caring for your emotional health is just as important as taking care of your physical health. Social workers offer one to one counselling for you and your family member/care partner.

There are many practical ways a social worker can help. They can help you:

- Fill out disability forms if you have financial concerns.
- Provide information on available supports and services.
- Help you complete your Power of Attorney forms or get legal advice.

Questions you may have for a social worker:

- “I am concerned about money. What financial supports are available?”
- “My family cannot bring me to my appointments. How can I get to the cancer centre?”
- “I am feeling sad, scared, angry or stressed since I was diagnosed with cancer and it is affecting my relationships. How do I deal with it?”
- “I keep thinking - why did this happen to me? or “how do I make sense of it?”
- “I am feeling tired and cannot do the same things around the house I used to. What community supports are available to me?”
- “I am worried about the future. Is there anything my family and I can do to prepare?”

Call: 905-576-8711 or 1-866-338-1778 extension 33282 to make an appointment with a dietitian, speech language pathologist or social worker,

### Indigenous Navigator

The Indigenous Navigator can offer support to you and your family member/care partner if you identify as First Nation, indigenous, Metis or Inuit and have been affected by cancer.

The Indigenous Navigator can help you:

- Connect with cultural and translation services.
- Plan care that is focused on your goals and wishes.
- Get answers to questions about your care.
- Access care and services at home.

Call 905-576-8711 or 1-866-338-1778 extension 32554 to schedule an appointment with the Indigenous Navigator. You can also ask a member of your healthcare team to connect you with the Indigenous Navigator.

### **Supports in the community**

#### Ontario Health atHome

Ontario Health atHome connects you with the care you need at home. You, your family member/care partner or a member of your healthcare team can make a referral. A care coordinator will talk with you about your care needs and develop a plan with you.

Call 1-800-263-3877 or go to the website at: [ontariohealthathome.ca](https://ontariohealthathome.ca)

#### Hospices

Hospice programs offer palliative care support to people living at home, in the hospital, long-term care homes, retirement homes and shelters. Support for family members and care partners to cope with the death of someone is also available.

VON Durham Hospice Services: Call 905-240-4522 or go to the website: [vondurham.org](https://vondurham.org).

Oak Ridges Hospice: Call 289-225-0202 or go to the website: [oakridgeshospice.com](https://oakridgeshospice.com).

#### Hearth Place Cancer Support Centre

Hearth Place Cancer Support Centre is a centre for cancer patients and their families. Hearth Place offers support, information and wellness programs for men and women. There are also programs for children. Hearth Place is located at 86 Colborne St. West in Oshawa. Parking is free. Call 905-579-4833; email [hearthplace@hearthplace.org](mailto:hearthplace@hearthplace.org) or go to the website at [hearthplace.org](https://hearthplace.org).

**Contact list for your healthcare team**

Family Doctor/Nurse Practitioner: \_\_\_\_\_

Palliative Care Team: 905-576-8711 extension 33931

VON Palliative Care Community Team: \_\_\_\_\_

Ontario Health atHome: 1-800-263-3877

Visiting Nursing Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Personal Support Worker (PSW) Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Pharmacy: \_\_\_\_\_

VON Durham Hospice: 905-240-4522

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Talk to a member of the Palliative Care Team if you have any questions about the information in this handout.

Go to the Palliative Care Team's page on the cancer care pages of the Lakeridge Health website found at: [lakeridgehealth.on.ca/en/ourservices/drcc-palliative-care-service.asp](http://lakeridgehealth.on.ca/en/ourservices/drcc-palliative-care-service.asp) for more information.

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