

CANCERFOCUS



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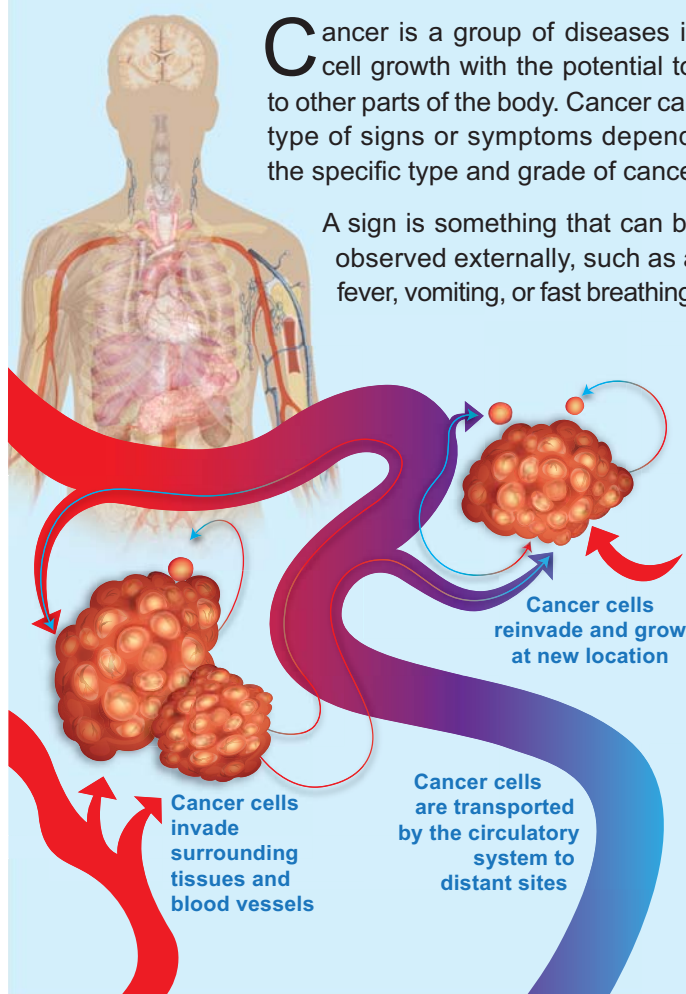
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GENERAL CANCER SYMPTOMS

A Broad Spectrum of Symptoms

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Fever



Vomiting



Fast breathing

What is a Symptom?

Symptoms are perceived only by the person who has the condition. For example, weakness, tiredness, and pain are symptoms.

One may experience both signs and symptoms of cancer, which can signal that something is wrong in your body.

As a cancer grows, it can begin to push on nearby organs, blood vessels, and nerves. This pressure causes some of the signs and symptoms of cancer. If the cancer is in a critical area, such as certain parts of the brain, even the smallest tumor can cause symptoms.

Noticing cancer signs and symptoms is important, since treatments work best when the disease is found early. This often means a better chance for a cure.

Some general signs and symptoms associated with, but not specific to, cancer may include:

Sores that don't heal

Sores on any part of the body which are difficult to heal, such as sores on the skin, penis, vagina, or oral cavity, should be dealt promptly.

Nagging cough or hoarseness

A persistent cough could be a sign of lung cancer. Persistent hoarseness could be a sign of cancer of larynx (voice box) or thyroid.

Recent change in a wart or mole

Any change in colour, shape, size or loss of definite borders could be a sign of a melanoma which, if diagnosed early, can be treated successfully.

Unusual bleeding or discharge

Unusual bleeding or discharge from any orifice of the body may be a sign of cancer. Blood in the stool (or a dark or black stool) could be a sign of colorectal cancer. A bloody discharge from the nipple may be a sign of breast cancer.

Tiredness that doesn't get better with rest

This symptom could be an early sign of cancer, as cancer uses your body's nutrients to grow and advance.

Indigestion or difficulty in swallowing

While they commonly have other causes, these symptoms may indicate cancer of the esophagus, stomach or pharynx (throat).

Thickening of lump in breast or other parts of the body

Many cancers can be felt through the skin, particularly in the breast, testicle, lymph nodes and the soft tissues of the body. A lump or thickening may be an early or late sign of cancer.

Unexplained weight loss

An unexplained weight loss may be the first noticeable sign of cancers of the pancreas, stomach, oesophagus or lung.

Change in bowel habits or bladder function

Any changes in bladder or bowel function, such as diarrhea, constipation, pain with urination, should be reported to a doctor.

If you regularly experience any of the above symptoms, it is important that you see your doctor and have your symptoms checked out.

No symptom should be ignored, especially if it persists for longer than two weeks.

Singapore Cancer Society offers a range of cancer screening services at the SCS Clinic @ Bishan, without charge, throughout the year. For more information call **1800-727-3333** or visit <https://bit.ly/2KysC1b>

PROTON BEAM THERAPY

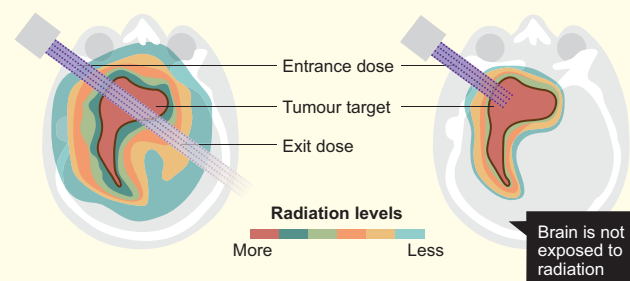
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Proton beam therapy is an advanced form of radiotherapy – a high energy beam of protons, rather than the high energy X-rays in standard radiotherapy, is used to cure cancer. The use of protons in medical treatment was first proposed as far back as 1946 by Robert Wilson¹, but really came of age in the last 2 decades. Any new technology attracts its fair share of controversies, and this has been no different for proton therapy. The most contentious issues have arisen due to the high costs associated with a course of proton therapy, ranging from \$40,000 in Asian centres to as high as \$300,000 in North America.

The main advantage of using protons is the ability to reduce radiation dose to the surrounding normal organs with the hope of reducing long term side-effects.

CLINICAL BENEFITS

Beams of protons can be more tightly focused than beams of X-rays, killing cancer cells while sparing more of the surrounding tissue. This is beneficial for isolated tumours near sensitive parts of the body, such as the spinal cord and brain.



CONVENTIONAL RADIATION THERAPY

Beam passes through the patient, resulting in healthy cells being damaged by the beam.

PROTON THERAPY

Protons can be tuned to stop at the depth of the tumour and release their energy. Fewer healthy cells are exposed.

Source: Dose levels from Fig. 1a, A. J. Lomax et al. *Radiother Oncol.* 51, 257-271 (1999)

In an effort to provide a balance between cost and benefit, many countries have now established national guidelines and roadmaps for proton treatment². The growing list of uses include childhood cancers, brain, spinal, eye, lung, pancreatic, breast, head, and neck cancers. We eagerly look forward to the arrival of proton therapy in Singapore next year, with the hope of bringing cancer treatment to the next level for our patients.



Proton therapy is more precise than X-ray therapy and carries less risk of damaging healthy tissue around the tumour. Protons are heavy particles that are positively charged and stop once they reach their target.

By contrast, X-ray beams are made of photons, which are particles with almost no mass. The lightness of photons enables them to travel easily through the body, but also through healthy tissue.

References: 1. Wilson RR, Radiological use of fast protons. *Radiology*. 1946;47:487-491. 2. Crellin A, The Road Map for National Health Service Proton Beam Therapy. *Clinical Oncology* (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clon.2018.02.032>.

IMPORTANCE OF CANCER REHABILITATION

Rehabilitation in the various phases

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Depending on the exposure to the types of cancer treatment, cancer survivors often face debilitating side-effects, such as fatigue, cognitive dysfunction, peripheral neuropathy, lymphedema and pain, interference with their physical and mental well-being, role functioning, and quality of life.

Most cancers are diagnosed in the older adults who may also have preexisting comorbid conditions (e.g., stroke, arthritis, diabetes, and heart disease) that can be exacerbated by cancer treatment, leading to an increased demand for rehabilitation.

Interventions designed to optimise functional ability, promote self-management of physical symptoms, and lifestyle behavioral change, are necessary to support cancer survivors in their recovery and enable them to resume their life roles, including preserving their work ability.



Cancer rehabilitation should be considered an integral part of acute cancer care, and supportive and survivorshipcare, as it comprises four phases — Preventive, Restorative, Supportive, and Palliative, to serve patients at various stages of disease progression, from pretreatment and treatment, post-treatment, and relapse to end of life.¹


Specifically, rehabilitation services offer interventions that are necessary to meet the emerging needs of cancer patients along the care continuum. For instance, during pretreatment and treatment phase, patients are educated on maintaining physical activity to prevent deconditioning and during advanced stages, provision of resources in anticipation of functional decline and encouraging fulfillment of meaningful life goals are emphasised.²



References: 1. Okamura, H. (2011). Importance of rehabilitation in cancer treatment and palliative medicine. *Japanese journal of clinical oncology*, 41(6), 733-738. 2. Silver, J.K., Baima, J. and Mayer, R.S. (2013), Impairment-driven cancer rehabilitation: An essential component of quality care and survivorship. *CA A Cancer Journal for Clinicians*, 63: 295-317. doi:10.3322/caac.21186


Examples of intervention provided at cancer rehabilitation centres for each of the four rehabilitation phases:

PREVENTIVE
(Prevent impairment)



INTERVENTION	PURPOSE
▶ General exercise for strength and cardiovascular conditioning	▶ Mitigate fatigue
▶ Targeted exercise (e.g., pelvic floor & oral motor exercise)	▶ Improve outcome after cancer treatment
▶ Stress management	▶ Reduce anxiety
▶ Dietary advice	▶ Improve dietary choices & eating habits
▶ Counselling	▶ Improve coping with illness & address financial concerns

SUPPORTIVE
(Optimise function)




INTERVENTION	PURPOSE
▶ Falls prevention training & education	▶ Reduce risk of falls
▶ Home modification	▶ Enhance function & safety at home
▶ Activities of daily living training & modification	▶ Maintain functional ability
▶ Dietary support	▶ Optimise nutrition
▶ Advance care planning	▶ Identify preferences & facilitate care

RESTORATIVE
(Promote recovery)



INTERVENTION	PURPOSE
▶ Therapeutic exercise	▶ Reduce specific muscle imbalances & functional limitation
▶ Supervised exercise	▶ Improve strength & cardiovascular function
▶ Oral motor exercise	▶ Improve voice, speech & swallowing ability
▶ Soft-tissue mobilisation	▶ Improve range of motion
▶ Lymphedema management	▶ Reduce swelling
▶ Cognitive training	▶ Improve memory
▶ Lifestyle & behavioral modification surrounding exercise, sleep & diet	▶ Reduce fatigue
▶ Weight management	▶ Reduce obesity & achieve ideal weight & body composition
▶ Management of common hand conditions such as trigger finger and de Quervain's tenosynovitis	▶ Improve hand function
▶ Physical modalities	▶ Relieve symptoms such as pain, numbness, and tingling
▶ Return to work programme	▶ Improve work ability
▶ Sexual health support	▶ Enhance intimate relationship & regain sexual health

PALLIATIVE
(Enhance quality of life)



INTERVENTION	PURPOSE
▶ Prescription of equipment/ assistive device	▶ Enable functional ability
▶ Person-centred goal setting	▶ Prioritise needs & fulfill meaningful goals
▶ Symptom management	▶ Alleviate symptoms such as pain and swelling
▶ Activity engagement	▶ Maintain physical and mental well-being
▶ Dietary care	▶ Ensure adequate nutrition
▶ Swallowing assessment	▶ Ensure safe & appropriate feeding method
▶ Caregiver training	▶ Equip caregiver with the skills to assist with self-care tasks at home
▶ Caregiver support	▶ Enable caregiver to maintain well-being & prevent burnout

The SCS Cancer Rehabilitation Centre (CRC) provides integrated care to address the needs of cancer patients, survivors, and caregivers.

The CRC largely serves non-acute cases which do not require frequent hospital follow-up. SCS rehabilitation team works with patients and caregivers to determine rehabilitation goals and craft personalised programmes.

For more information on SCS' cancer rehabilitation programmes, call **1800-727-3333** or email rehab@singaporecancersociety.org.sg.

END OF LIFE DECISION-MAKING FOR CANCER PATIENTS

Florina Wong
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End-of-life (EOL) planning and conversations are becoming increasingly important as our society ages. Topics surrounding EOL preferences can help persons or persons with life-threatening illness make a commitment to life, take better care of themselves, and let their families take better care of them too.



Having EOL discussions allow individuals to express their future care preferences to their loved ones and healthcare providers, in the event that they are seriously ill and/or unable to make their own decisions.

If one fails to plan for the transition to EOL care, the following consequences may occur:

- Medical treatments inconsistent with personal preferences
- Utilisation of health care resources and its benefits and costs that have yet to be discussed and reviewed
- Family members not having the right guidance in making care decisions when the person can no longer express care preference



- 1 Discussion of goals, values, and beliefs and what it means to "live well"
- 2 Addressing fears of EOL related issues
- 3 Involving loved ones in discussion of their care preferences such as full treatment, limited intervention or comfort care and nomination of a substitute decision-maker
- 4 Awareness and understanding of the medical condition
- 5 Understanding the benefits and burdens of life-sustaining treatments specific to the illness(es)
- 6 Options of medical interventions for EOL cancer patients
- 7 Preferred place of care and preferred care plan

The above related decisions are sometimes documented in a document called the Advanced Care Plan (ACP). This document is signed off by the person/patient, nominated healthcare spokesperson(s), physician and an ACP facilitator.

This document is usually communicated with relevant persons and healthcare providers to facilitate awareness of patient's care preferences. Nevertheless, this document can be reviewed and edited if preferences



change as EOL discussions are an ongoing process that promotes understanding, reflection, and discussions between patient, loved ones and healthcare providers; and the person is empowered to make informed choices on his/her own EOL matters.

There are persons who are unsure about their care preference and they are encouraged to discuss and reflect on the given information with their loved ones and follow-up discussions can take place when they are ready.

If you or your loved ones would like to discuss EOL issues, you can speak to your healthcare worker or social worker trained in EOL conversation.

AT SINGAPORE CANCER SOCIETY



SINGAPORE CANCER SOCIETY (SCS) provides holistic hospice care for patients with advanced cancer in the comfort of their own homes. The Hospice Care team comprises of medical and allied health professionals who make regular visits to our patients and their families.

Patients are supported with financial assistance, psycho-social, emotional, and spiritual support. SCS also offer bereavement support to family members and caregivers in the months following the death of a patient.

For more info on EOL planning and discussion email to:
scs_pss@singaporecancersociety.org.

SINGAPORE CANCER SOCIETY (SCS) is a Voluntary Welfare Organisation dedicated to minimise cancer and maximise lives through a holistic care system leveraging on effective programmes and services.



FIGHTING CANCER DURING COVID-19

Despite the Covid-19 Circuit Breaker measures, SCS continue to support cancer patients and their families, especially financially challenged individuals, through cancer treatment subsidies, financial and welfare aid, hospice home care services, rehabilitation programmes and support groups for cancer survivors; and many more.

SCS is committed to providing these essential services during this time. We need to ensure that no patients or family members are deprived of assistance during this period. Our frontline staff continue to serve patients while support services are still made available online.



SUPPORTING CANCER PATIENTS AND THEIR FAMILY

One such individual who continues to benefit from our services is Mr Repin Bin Atan. Mr Repin was diagnosed with diffuse large B-cell lymphoma (a type of blood cancer). It was hard making ends meet as he was the sole breadwinner supporting his wife and two kids. With not much education, he had to take on two part-time cleaning jobs, which required him to work from 7am to 9pm almost every day. He approached SCS for assistance. SCS was able to ease his financial burden by providing him welfare assistance. His son is also under the SCS Tuition Programme and the Education Financial Assistance Scheme.

Cancer can be an arduous journey for many patients, caregivers and family members. Community support is extremely crucial to SCS in expanding and strengthening the outreach in the collective fight against cancer.



YOU CAN DO YOURT PART BY DONATING

- **SCS website**
<http://bit.ly/donateSCS>
- **Donation portal**
https://www.giving.sg/singapore-cancer-society/protecting_cancer_patients_during_covid-19

PayNow

Log in via online banking or your mobile banking app and click on the PayNow icon. At the Unique Entity Number (UEN), key in S65SS0033F, select "Singapore Cancer Society" and enter your donation amount. Kindly indicate your Full Name and NRIC/FIN no. in the reference number field if you wish to receive a tax exemption.

- Cash and cheque donations, as well as credit card and GIRO applications (received via fax/mail) will be processed during office hours.



PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES BY SCS



Screening

SCS provides the following screening at no cost to eligible participants for Pap Test, HPV Test, Mammogram and HPV Vaccination. SCS also distributes FIT Kit (colorectal cancer) at no cost.



Educational Talks

SCS provides cancer awareness talks in all languages. SCS also conducts talks to the youth and children on smoking. These talks are at no cost and presented by a Doctor/Professional.



Financial Aid

The Society provides a range of assistance schemes to alleviate the financial burden of treatment costs for Singaporeans and Permanent Residents from low and middle income families. SCS has different funds to cater to the different needs of a cancer patient.



Support to the Cancer Community

SCS' programmes and services provides integrated care to the beneficiaries. SCS has different support groups for survivors/patients. With a holistic team of professionals, SCS Cancer Rehabilitation Centre address the needs of cancer patients, survivors, and caregivers.



Hospice Care

The SCS Hospice Care team applies a multi-disciplinary approach to ensure that both patients and their family members' needs are appropriately assessed and addressed. Towards the end of life, much support is needed, especially to the family and immediate caregivers of the cancer patient.

Established in 1964, Singapore Cancer Society (SCS), a voluntary welfare organisation has positively impacted the lives of those affected by cancer.

It actively promotes cancer awareness in the community and offers cancer screening services [Mammogram, Pap Test, Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT)], welfare assistance, community based cancer rehabilitation, cancer support group activities and hospice home care to support cancer patients and families.

OUR VISION

To be Singapore's leading charity in the fight for a cancer-free community.

OUR MISSION

To Minimise Cancer and Maximise Lives through effective programmes.

OUR PROGRAMMES

1. Financial Assistance

- Cancer Treatment Fund (Cancer treatment subsidies for cancer patients)
- Cancer Care Fund
- Welfare Aid for needy cancer patients

2. Free Cancer Screening

- Pap Test (For Cervical cancer)
- Health Education: Breast Self-Examination
- Mammogram screening (For Breast cancer; CHAS Card Holders)
- Faecal Immunochemical Test [FIT] (For Colorectal cancer)

3. Public Education

- Cancer awareness campaigns
- Cancer-related talks and forums
- Cancer information (via website & telephone service)

4. Cancer Support

- Cancer support groups and activities
- Psycho-social services

5. Cancer Rehabilitation

- Integrated, person-centred holistic approach with aim to return to normalcy

6. Hospice Care Services

- Medical and psycho-social care for terminally ill cancer patients

7. Cancer Research

- Cancer Research grants and awards

8. Volunteers Programme

- Volunteering opportunities to suit people with different interests and skills

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HELPING TO EASE THEIR FINANCIAL STRUGGLES

Cancer took her son at the age of 39. Three years later, her world came crumbling down again when she and her husband were diagnosed with cancer. Despite that, this iron-willed lady braved through her cancer and serves as a pillar of strength to her husband.

In 2016, Mdm Kamsiah experienced heavy vaginal bleeding over 2 weeks. Upon examination by a gynaecologist, she was diagnosed with stage 3 endometrial cancer. All she could think of was to stay alive for her grandchildren who lost their father to cancer.

She underwent treatment and had to continue her dialysis for kidney failure. A month later, her husband was diagnosed with stage 3 lymphoma cancer. She knew she had to fight on. She did not want to give up.

As a cancer patient with kidney failure, her medical fees were hefty. Their medical expenses doubled after her husband's diagnosis. They were trying to make their ends meet. Her doctor in National University Hospital also advised her to get help as they had no income to support their treatment bill.

During that time, a social worker referred them to Singapore Cancer Society (SCS). SCS assisted them by subsidising their cancer treatment cost with the SCS Welfare Aid fund. These aids lifted the heavy burden on their finances, allowing them to focus on their recovery.

Today, 65 year old Mdm Kamsiah is in remission while her husband is still undergoing cancer treatments with the aid of SCS' financial assistance schemes.

"Thank you SCS and all donors. With the help of SCS' financial assistance schemes, both my husband and I were able to undergo treatment for our cancer. Thank you for giving us hope that we are not alone in this journey," expressed Mdm Kamsiah.

The Welfare Aid fund provides temporary financial assistance and/or medical supplies to enhance the well-being of needy cancer patients. Medical supplies include the supply of milk, diapers, medical dressings, stoma bags and other medical equipment.

Learn more information about the Welfare Aid fund here

<https://bit.ly/2IMxkiy> or email welfare@singaporecancersociety.org.sg



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services managed by
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