How Cancer is Treated

Watch theCancer.Net Video: Types of Cancer Treatment, with Sundar Jagannath, MD[1], adapted from this content.

The cancer treatment options your doctor recommends depends on the type and stage of cancer, possible side effects, and the patient's preferences and overall health. In cancer care, different types of doctors often work together to create a patient's overall treatment plan that combines different types of treatments. This is called a multidisciplinary team [2].

Making Decisions About Cancer Treatment [3]

After a diagnosis of cancer, patients and their families have to make a number of decisions about cancer treatment, some of which are more difficult than others. These decisions are complicated by feelings of anxiety [4], unfamiliar words, statistics, and a sense of urgency. However, unless the situation is extremely urgent, it is important to allow time to research your options, ask questions, and talk with family or a trusted friend.

Bone Marrow/Stem Cell Transplantation [5]

Stem cell transplantation is a procedure that is most often recommended as a treatment option for people with leukemia, multiple myeloma, and some types of lymphoma. It may also be used to treat some genetic diseases that involve the blood. This section provides information on stem cell transplantation and its side effects.

Chemotherapy [6]

Chemotherapy is the use of drugs to kill cancer cells. However, when most people use the word chemotherapy they are referring specifically to drug treatments for cancer that destroy cancer cells by stopping their ability to grow and divide. This section includes information about chemotherapy, its side effects, and what to expect when undergoing chemotherapy treatment.

Clinical Trials [7]

Information on clinical trials and patient safety, steps involved in the research process, questions to ask the research team, and links to find cancer clinical trials.

Immunotherapy and Vaccines [8]

Immunotherapy and vaccines are types of cancer treatments that use the body's immune system to fight cancer.

Personalized and Targeted Therapies [9]

Personalized or targeted therapies are types of treatment that targets a cancer?s specific genes, proteins, or the tissue environment that contributes to cancer growth and survival.

Radiation Therapy [10]

Radiation therapy is the use of high-energy x-rays or other particles to kill cancer cells. The articles in this section describe radiation therapy, what to expect when receiving radiation therapy, and side effects of radiation therapy.

Surgery [11]

Surgery (the removal of cancerous tissue from the body) is the oldest type of cancer therapy. The articles in this section describe surgery, what to expect when undergoing, and side effects of surgery.

When to Call the Doctor During Cancer Treatment [12]

Cancer and cancer treatments may cause side effects that require the immediate attention of your doctor and health care team. In this article, learn about the signs and symptoms of infections, deep vein thrombosis (a potentially life-threatening blood clot), and tumor lysis syndrome (a condition that can cause organ failure)?all of which require an immediate call to your doctor.

Caring for the Symptoms of Cancer and its Treatment [13]

This article explains the importance of relieving the symptoms and side effects of cancer and its treatment, an approach called palliative care.

Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) [14]

Information on the safety and effectiveness of CAM, including questions to ask your doctor when considering CAM, risks and potential benefits of CAM, facts about supplements, and how to find reliable CAM resources.

When the First Treatment Doesn't Work [15]

When a person is diagnosed with cancer, the oncologist (a doctor who specializes in treating people with cancer) recommends a treatment plan that is most likely to have the greatest benefits and the fewest risks or side effects. That initial treatment?called first-line treatment or first-line therapy?is usually chosen because it has proven to be effective for similar patients who have the same type and stage of cancer.

Drug Information Resources [16]

Through ongoing research, the medications used to treat cancer are constantly being evaluated in different combinations and to treat different cancers. Talking with your doctor is often the best way to learn about the medications you've been prescribed, their purpose, and their potential side effects or interactions.

Links:
[1] http://www.cancer.net/node/27111
[2] http://www.cancer.net/node/24957
[3] http://www.cancer.net/navigating-cancer-care/how-cancer-treated/making-decisions-about-cancer-treatment
[4] http://www.cancer.net/node/30336
[5] http://www.cancer.net/navigating-cancer-care/how-cancer-treated/bone-marrowstem-cell-transplantation
[6] http://www.cancer.net/navigating-cancer-care/how-cancer-treated/chemotherapy
[7] http://www.cancer.net/navigating-cancer-care/how-cancer-treated/clinical-trials
[8] http://www.cancer.net/navigating-cancer-care/how-cancer-treated/immunotherapy-and-vaccines
[9] http://www.cancer.net/navigating-cancer-care/how-cancer-treated/personalized-and-targeted-therapies
[10] http://www.cancer.net/navigating-cancer-care/how-cancer-treated/radiation-therapy
[11] http://www.cancer.net/navigating-cancer-care/how-cancer-treated/surgery
[12] http://www.cancer.net/navigating-cancer-care/how-cancer-treated/when-call-doctor-during-cancer-treatment
[13] http://www.cancer.net/navigating-cancer-care/how-cancer-treated/caring-symptoms-cancer-and-its-treatment
[14] http://www.cancer.net/navigating-cancer-care/how-cancer-treated/complementary-and-alternative-medicine-cam
[15] http://www.cancer.net/navigating-cancer-care/how-cancer-treated/when-first-treatment-doesnt-work
[16] http://www.cancer.net/navigating-cancer-care/how-cancer-treated/drug-information-resources