

Nurse Practitioners in Cancer Care

An Oncology Nurse Practitioner (ONP) may be part of your cancer care team. ONPs are advanced practice nurses with additional education and training in cancer care. They will work with you and your cancer care team to enhance the level of care you receive.

If an ONP is part of your cancer care team, they may:

- Monitor and manage your cancer treatment.
- Monitor and manage your side effects during your cancer treatment.
- Organize follow up care after your cancer treatment is complete.

ONPs enhance your care in many different ways from helping explain diagnosis to providing practical, emotional support. They work to coordinate an individualized care plan with your cancer care team that outlines appropriate treatment options such as chemotherapy or radiation therapy.

ONPs perform a variety of tasks including but not limited to scheduling tests, performing procedures, analyzing lab results in a timely fashion and much more.

ONPs help keep care closer to home by ensuring patients have access to telehealth and virtual patient support as well as in person. They work to make things as easy for the patient as possible to ensure patients have access to the proper cancer care they need.

An ONP can also refer patients to other health care providers as needed.

Some of the main duties of a ONP are outlined below:

1. **Comprehensive Care:** ONPs provide full care to patients during their cancer experience. They work with other cancer care providers to develop treatment plans and supports that are specific to each patient's needs.
2. **Symptom Management:** ONPs are experts in managing the physical symptoms of cancer. The ONP will work with you to help ease pain, nausea, fatigue, and other side effects of cancer treatment.
3. **Education:** ONPs provide education and support to patients and their families. They help patients understand the diagnosis, treatment options, and what to expect during the cancer experience.
4. **Coordination of Care:** ONPs help organize appointments and explain treatment plans. They can help reduce wait times and improve travel related issues getting to appointments.

5. **Advocacy for Patients:** ONPs want the best possible care for people with cancer. They will support patients during their treatments and respond to their needs. They may take part in writing new policies that can improve access to cancer care and support services.
6. **Research and Innovation:** Cancer care is always improving. ONPs may be part of a research studies team to develop new treatments and care practices.

The ONP ensures you are an active member of your cancer care team making decisions about your cancer care.

“At first when I had a Nurse Practitioner, I thought “I’m being cared for by a nurse not an oncologist?” But that was quickly replaced with me feeling fortunate to be in the hands of a Nurse Practitioner. They took the extra time to explain things and answer my questions. She worked with my oncologist and other cancer care providers to give me excellent care”
~ John, patient

Patient and family feedback is very important to us.

We would like to invite you to send any comments or suggestions on how to improve this booklet to education.cancercare@nshealth.ca or feel free to call us at 1-866-599-2267.

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