



Winchester
District
Memorial
Hospital

WDMH Cancer Talk



Spring 2021

What You Need to Know About the COVID-19 Vaccine

Everyone has questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, including patients undergoing cancer treatment.

Cancer Care Ontario has developed a Fact Sheet to help answer your questions. Here are some highlights:

- ✓ Vaccines are safe and they can protect you from serious illnesses like COVID-19.
- ✓ People who have or have recently had cancer may have a higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. The vaccine is an important part of protecting people with cancer.
- ✓ The COVID-19 vaccine has been tested on thousands of people and has proven to be safe. Health Canada only approves vaccines that meet strict safety and efficacy (how well something works) standards. The COVID-19 vaccine has not yet been tested on people with cancer. However, from studying other vaccines, such as the flu shot, doctors say that the COVID-19 vaccine is safe for most people with cancer.

BOTTOM LINE:

Most cancer patients should get the COVID-19 vaccine. To confirm the best time to do so, speak to your cancer team if you are getting treatment now. Speak to your primary care provider if your treatment is complete.

To learn more, download the Fact Sheet at <http://bit.ly/COVIDCancerFacts>.



*The COVID-19 vaccine arrived at WDMH on February 19th.
All staff and physicians have now been vaccinated.
We are working hard to keep everyone safe!*

A Fond Farewell

It is with mixed emotions that we share that **Michelle Renaud**, WDMH's Cancer Coach, is retiring after more than 40 years in nursing - and 15 years at WDMH. Her last day at WDMH is May 29th.

Michelle has been an incredible support to so many patients living with cancer, both at WDMH and within our local region.

Michelle was a community nurse for 19 years and worked with the Ontario Breast Screening Program for six years before joining WDMH's Chemotherapy team in 2009. She is certified in both oncology nursing and hospice palliative care. Michelle completed her comprehensive cancer coach training program through the Ontario Regional Cancer Foundation's Maplesoft Centre. She received the WDMH Nursing Lifelong Learner Award in 2017.



Colleague Jackie McMillan says Michelle has cared for oncology patients and families in so many areas - from community nursing to breast screening to chemotherapy and finally as WDMH's Cancer Coach: "She has been a friend, mentor and a great example of oncology nursing excellence. Michelle is always encouraging me to continue my education and seek out learning opportunities that will enhance our skills in providing care." Team Leader Callie Laurin agrees. "It's hard to know where to begin. Michelle has touched many lives throughout her career. I'm sure wherever her retirement brings her, she will continue to shine her light wherever she goes!" Congratulations and enjoy your well-earned retirement Michelle. We will miss you! Recruitment for a new Cancer Coach is underway.

Happy Nursing Oncology Day

On April 6th, we celebrated Oncology Nursing Day. This year's theme was "I Am, I will: A Call to Action".

We want to salute the amazing nursing team at WDMH who leads our Oncology Unit and also the nurses in other areas of the hospital - Emergency, the Operating Room, the Medical/Surgical Unit and the Complex & Continuing Care Unit - who care for patients and families at some point on their cancer care journey. We are one team!



Here are just some of our amazing oncology nurses (l-r): Callie Laurin, Penny Webster, Sarah Potestio & Michelle Renaud (Missing: Jackie McMillan, Kaylee Hay and Lorraine Carey)

Understanding Palliative Care

Palliative care helps support patients and families who are dealing with a life-threatening illness. The goal is to relieve their suffering so they can have the best possible quality of life.



Palliative care is not the withdrawal of treatment. Treatments like chemotherapy, radiation, and pain and symptom management can be part of palliative care. Palliative care should start when a person is diagnosed. It continues through treatment, to the end of life, and helps support the family through their grief.

If you have been diagnosed with cancer, you can start to talk with your healthcare team about your wishes, values, and beliefs. Starting these conversations early helps make sure the care you receive is based on what is important to you. They can connect you to resources whose main focus is palliative care.

You may find your wants and needs change during your experience with cancer. Make sure you tell your healthcare team about changes so they can give you the best care. Palliative care and Hospice care provide comfort. But palliative care can begin at diagnosis of a life-limiting illness and at the same time as treatment. Hospice care begins after treatment of the disease is stopped, when it is clear that treatment options are no longer helpful.

At WDMH, our health care team is focused on patient-centred care, ensuring that our patients and their families are well supported throughout their illness.

Partner Profiles:

Regional Palliative Consultation Team

The Regional Palliative Consultation Team (RPCT) includes nurse practitioners, advanced practice nurses, nurse specialists, and physicians with experience in palliative care. They offer education and coaching. Speak to your health care provider for a referral or visit <https://champlainpalliative.ca/support-services/>

Champlain Hospice Palliative Care Program

The Champlain Hospice Palliative Care Program offers many supports across eastern Ontario including day hospice, visiting volunteers, residential hospice, equipment loan rentals, family physicians, palliative care units, teams, and specialists. For more information, speak to your health care provider, visit www.champlainpalliative.ca or call 613-683-3779.

WHAT IS ANTICIPATORY GRIEF?

The term **anticipatory grief** is most often used when talking about the families of someone who is dying. Anticipatory grief can also be experienced by individuals with a life-limiting illness.

Anticipatory grief allows individuals and family members to absorb the reality of loss. Some feelings expressed by individuals and family members include depression, heightened concern for the dying person, rehearsal of death, and attempts to adjust the end result of death.

If anticipatory grief is overwhelming for an individual or family member there are options for support. Please speak to any member of your health care team for resources.



ONLINE RESOURCES

We are pleased to share a number of resources that might be helpful to you. As always, if you have any questions, please just ask.

www.ottawacancer.ca

Visit the **Ottawa Regional Cancer Foundation** website for online resources, blogs and other supports. You can also access a cancer coach.

www.nourishonline.ca

Nourish wants to help you take care of yourself by eating well, and by managing some of the common side effects of cancer and its treatment.

www.lgfb.ca

In-person **Look Good Feel Better** workshops are temporarily suspended. Sign up for a virtual one on Skincare & Cosmetics or Wigs & Hair Alternatives. LGFB also has a virtual workshop on breast care.

cancerchat.desouzainstitute.com

Get the support you need through online cancer chat groups. **Cancer Chat Canada**, offered through the De Souza Institute offers a safe place to talk.

www.chi.ca

The **Centre for Health Innovation** (formerly the Ontario Integrative Cancer Centre) offers telemedicine and online programs such as

www.virtualhospice.ca

The **Canadian Virtual Hospice** provides support and personalized information about palliative and end-of-life care .

www.healingandcancer.org

Learn about things you can do to empower yourself and help yourself heal body, mind, and spirit on the **Healing and Cancer** website.

www.ontariocaregiver.ca

Caregivers need support too. The **Ontario Caregivers Association** is here to help. With one point of access for information.

www.cancercareontario.ca

Cancer Care Ontario offers information and guidelines on all forms of cancer based on best evidence available from healthcare research.

www.cma.ca

The Canadian Medical Association has a **Virtual Guide for Patients** to help you prepare for virtual visits with your doctor. Check it out for great advice.

www.dundascountyhospice.ca

Anyone can make a referral to the **Dundas County Hospice**, including healthcare and social agencies, nurses, physicians, clergy, friends, the person who is ill or their families. Clients must reside in Dundas County.

www.victoriaquiltscanada.com

Would you like to order a quilt for someone going through cancer treatment? Call **Victoria's Quilts** at 613-843-9212 or visit the website.