

Stem Cell Transplant Circle of Care

Meet Your Transplant Team



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A team of healthcare providers will care for you during different phases of your stem cell transplant. You may not meet every member of the team, but they all play an important role in your care.

An **attending transplant doctor** will be in charge of your care during your treatment. You will have a primary transplant doctor during your outpatient treatments and a different attending transplant doctor while you are in hospital. The attending transplant doctor is a hematologist. A hematologist is a doctor who cares for and treats people with blood diseases, such as multiple myeloma or lymphoma.

A **fellow** is a doctor who is receiving additional training in cancer care. A **resident** is a doctor who is completing a rotation on the unit. A **medical student** (or clinical clerk) is a student completing general training. Fellows, residents, and medical students work with your attending transplant doctor to manage your care.

Stem cell transplant nurses are registered nurses specially trained in the care of people having stem cell transplants. They organize and schedule outpatient visits, tests, procedures, and treatments required for your transplant. The transplant nurse works with the attending transplant doctor and will meet you at the time of your initial consult. They will also provide you care during your mobilization treatment, stem cell collection, and re-infusion of your cells. They will educate you about your specific treatment plan and the transplant process.

Inpatient oncology nurses are registered nurses who will manage your care during your stay in hospital. They will give your high dose chemotherapy before transplant and monitor your health each day while you are in hospital. Nurses work closely with your healthcare team to manage any symptoms and are there to provide you with education and support. The inpatient nurses are skilled in managing possible side effects and symptoms of a transplant.

Other team members you may meet on the unit are the **unit clerk**, who completes tasks such as processing doctor's orders and organizing tests and procedures. A **Personal Care Assistant (PCA)** may assist you with personal care needs and also assists on the unit by stocking supplies and answering call bells. The **environmental services staff** (housekeeping) help keep the unit and your room clean. These team members care about your needs and can provide additional support.

A **clinical nurse specialist** is an advanced practice nurse and member of the inpatient Hematology Oncology Team. They are a registered nurse with a master's degree in nursing. Like the inpatient oncology nurses, they follow your care while you are in hospital. They provide additional assessment, support, and management of your care needs. They work alongside the healthcare team to coordinate and manage your care before, during and after your hospital stay.

Family and friends may visit you during your stay in hospital. Kingston General Hospital welcomes visitors and does not have scheduled visiting hours. Exercise is encouraged and going for walks with your visitor is a good way to stay active while in hospital. If you would like someone to stay with you overnight, let your inpatient nurse or unit clerk know and they can help find a reclining chair or cot. If your visitor is feeling sick, they should not visit when your white blood cells are low.

Meet Your Transplant Team (Continued)

Peer mentors can help answer your questions and give you an idea of what to expect (from the perspective of someone who has been there before). Peer mentors have a unique experience that only someone who has received a transplant can share. Talk to the stem cell transplant team if you would like to talk with one of our peer mentors.

A **social worker** is available to help you and your family to cope with the changes cancer brings about in your life. Social workers provide counseling and referral to support services. They can talk you and your family about, emotional, financial, and practical support needs.

A **spiritual care** provider helps patients and family as they experience times of uncertainty, transition, and loss. They can provide a safe space to address anxieties and fears, and the joys and griefs of life and death. They can visit, listen, and offer support, ministry, and counselling. You do not have to be religious to benefit from spiritual care.

A **physiotherapist** may work with you to help you maintain your strength and energy during your recovery. They will encourage you to stay active during your stay in hospital and may provide stretches and exercises that you can do in your own time.

A **registered dietitian** is available to help you meet your nutritional needs. Eating well is important for people with cancer to maintain overall health, energy, and strength. However, it can be hard to eat well when you have cancer and are recovering from a stem cell transplant. The dietitian can assess your nutritional health and help you set realistic nutritional goals. They can help manage symptoms or side effects like unintentional weight loss, loss of appetite, trouble swallowing, taste changes, sore or dry mouth, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or constipation. They work closely with the healthcare team to manage your nutritional needs and make nutritional recommendations.

Oncology pharmacists are pharmacists that specialize in cancer care. They check orders for cancer drugs and other medications prescribed for you. They may review your medications and make suggested changes to enhance your care. **Pharmacy technicians** prepare cancer drugs and other medications in the pharmacy.

A **symptom management team** (palliative care team) may be involved in your care to help with managing your symptoms, side effects, and emotional needs. They work alongside your healthcare team to make suggestions for managing symptoms such as pain, nausea, and bowel changes.

An **infectious diseases team** helps with managing your care to prevent and treat infections while your white blood cells are low.

Laboratory Services includes different labs at Kingston General Hospital and the Cell Processing Laboratory at Canadian Blood Services in Ottawa. The labs at KGH test your blood, report blood results, and provide blood products for transfusions. Canadian Blood Services processes, freezes, and stores your stem cells. When your cells are needed for transplant, they are shipped back to KGH.

A **home care agency**, for example Community Care Access Centre (CCAC), may be involved before or after your hospital stay. They help to care for you in your home and may provide central line care, intravenous fluid therapy, and giving you certain medications.