

# Cancer treatment

There are many kinds of cancer treatments.

## What are the main treatments?

The treatment used depends on the type of cancer and if the cancer has spread. Sometimes more than one treatment is used.

- **Surgery:** an operation to cut out a cancer.
- **Chemotherapy:** strong medicine that kills cancer cells. It is usually given as an injection into a vein (intravenously). It is sometimes given as a tablet.
- **Radiotherapy:** powerful beams that you can't see (called x-rays) that go into the body to kill cancer cells. It doesn't hurt and only takes a few minutes.
- **Other medicines:** these can stop the cancer growing. Talk to your doctor about how much treatment costs.

## Where do I have treatment?

Most people have treatment in a hospital.

- **Surgery:** you may need to stay in hospital for a few days.
- **Chemotherapy:** you may have chemotherapy daily, weekly or monthly for several months to a year. You will have short breaks between treatments for your body to get better.
- **Radiotherapy:** it is usually given Monday to Friday for a few weeks.



# Treatment helps get rid of cancer cells

## **Will treatment make me feel sick?**

Treatment can cause problems called side effects.

Chemotherapy and radiotherapy destroy cancer cells but they can also destroy healthy cells. This can cause side effects.

Different treatments cause different side effects.

## **What side effects might I have?**

- ⦿ Tiredness (fatigue)
- ⦿ Feeling sick (nausea)
- ⦿ Pain
- ⦿ Loss of appetite
- ⦿ Hair falling out
- ⦿ Problems with weight gain or loss
- ⦿ Puffy (swollen) arm or leg
- ⦿ Trouble thinking clearly
- ⦿ Problems going to the toilet
- ⦿ Not being able to have a baby
- ⦿ Feeling sad.

## **What can I do about the side effects?**

Ask your doctor how they can help you feel better. They may be able to give you medicines to stop the side effects.

### **More information**

⦿ **Cancer Council Helpline**

13 11 20

[www.cancerCouncil.com.au](http://www.cancerCouncil.com.au)

⦿ **Your local Aboriginal health service**