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Willamette Valley Cancer Institute  
520 Country Club Road  
Eugene, OR 97401  
(541) 683-5001

**Office hours:**

Monday – Thursday, 7:30 AM – 6:30 PM

Friday 7:30 AM – 6:00 PM

**After hours:**

If you are having a medical need after hours please call the numbers above to speak to a physician on call. If you need a prescription refill please call your pharmacy. Be prepared with the following information when you call.

- Name of your provider
- Type of cancer you have
- Names of current treatment medications
- The date of your last chemotherapy or radiation treatment
- If you have a port/PICC line.
- Reason for your call

**Parking**

- Due to limited parking, please do not bring campers, RVs, boats, trailers.
- Parking available in front and side of the 520 Country Club Road Site

## Table of Contents

Important Things to Know Before Starting Treatment.....	4
How Hormone Therapy Works .....	5
When to See Your Primary Care Provider (PCP) .....	6
Why you need your PCP.....	6
Your cancer specialists .....	6
The big picture .....	6
Bone Loss .....	7
Hot Flashes / Night Sweats .....	8
Joint Pain.....	9
Sexual Changes .....	10
Tips for Staying on Schedule with Hormone Therapy.....	11
WVCI Resources .....	12
Community Resources .....	14

## Important Things to Know Before Starting Treatment

Bring a list of the medications you take to each visit. This includes over-the-counter medicines and supplements.

Some hormone therapy drugs interact with certain foods. Foods to be avoided will be listed on information sheets you will get for each drug.

In addition to the hormone therapy, you may be given medications to prevent or manage side effects.

Hormone therapy pills may be filled at the WVCI retail pharmacy, another local pharmacy, or be supplied through a specialty pharmacy that ships the drug directly to your home. Unused drug can be taken **in a sealed container** to the Lane County Sheriff's office for disposal during regular business hours.

AVOID PREGNANCY while taking hormone therapy. This applies to female patients of childbearing age or the female partner of a male patient. Use a condom and one other type of birth control.

It is important to take hormone therapy pills every day. Please see the Tips for Staying on Schedule with Hormone Therapy section of this binder.

## How Hormone Therapy Works

Hormones are natural chemicals that affect the cells and tissues in our bodies. Prostate cancer and some breast cancers have hormone receptors and use hormones to grow. In order to treat the cancer, the hormones have to be blocked or slowed down.

Most hormone therapy treatments are pills that must be taken every day. Others are injections that are given into a muscle. Your doctor may give you one or both.

Changing the amount of hormones in the body can cause some side effects. This binder contains general information to help you manage the side effects of hormone therapy.

### **Breast cancer treatment:**

Estrogen and progesterone are hormones needed for female sex characteristics, bone growth and the menstrual cycle and pregnancy. They are produced mainly in the ovaries but a small amount comes from fat tissue and skin. Breast cancers are tested to determine if they are estrogen positive (ER +), progesterone positive (PR +) or both. If either or both of these are positive, they use hormones to grow. Hormone therapies for breast cancer work by blocking or reducing the body's ability to either make or use estrogen and/or progesterone.

This treatment should not be confused with hormone replacement therapy which is sometimes used to help women going through menopause. Women who have gone through menopause can still experience side effects of hormone therapy.

### **Prostate cancer treatment:**

Androgens are hormones needed for male sex characteristics and normal growth and function of the prostate. Testosterone and dihydrotestosterone (DHT) are androgens. They are produced mainly in the testicles but a small amount comes from the adrenal glands. Hormone therapies for prostate cancer work by blocking or reducing the body's ability to either make or use androgens.

## When to See Your Primary Care Provider (PCP)

To ensure quality care throughout your cancer journey, you need a team in place. The foundation of your team is your oncologist and your primary care provider (PCP).

Cancer care generally requires the technical knowledge and skills of specialty physicians, such as medical oncologists, surgeons and radiation oncologists.

Your PCP plays a central role during and after cancer therapy. An initial point of contact, your PCP will want to evaluate your symptoms, coordinate your care and work with you to make decisions regarding referrals.

### Why you need your PCP

Cancer came at one point in your life, but what about the high blood pressure you've been dealing with since last year or the recurrence of pain from an injury in your 20s?

Your PCP is fundamental to your continuity of care, overseeing and caring for any infections, injuries, immune system problems, medications and lifestyle changes that may have nothing to do with cancer.

Patients who stop seeing their PCP for routine care may find they are cured of cancer only to overlook a preventable illness, from simple bacterial infections to life-threatening diseases.

### Your cancer specialists

Willamette Valley Cancer Institute oncologists and other cancer-care providers on your team are here to ensure that you're receiving the latest and greatest cancer treatment. These specialists will work with your PCP to help you get the best overall care. That includes keeping your PCP up to date, so he or she can help you achieve optimal health.

### The big picture

Over the long term, a provider who knows your health history, your habits and your personality can more easily recognize any signs that indicate a potential change in your health, so continue seeing your PCP for regular check-ups and any new problems or symptoms, as you did before you developed cancer.

## Bone Loss

Hormones play a role in maintaining bones. Decreasing hormone levels, especially estrogen, can cause bones to become weak. This can increase the risk of fractures.

### Tips for managing / preventing

- Do weight bearing exercises. **Talk to your doctor before starting any of the activities listed.**
  - Dancing
  - Aerobics
  - Hiking
  - Jogging/running
  - Jumping rope
  - Climbing stairs
  - Tennis
  - Using elliptical or stair-step machines
  - Fast walking outdoors or on a treadmill
- Reduce or stop smoking
- Talk to your doctor about taking vitamin D and calcium supplements

## Hot Flashes / Night Sweats

### Tips for managing:

- Eat a low-fat diet
- Drink something with ice during a hot flash
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine & nicotine
- Dress in layers. Wear loose clothing made of natural fibers such as cotton & linen or made of materials that pull sweat away from the skin. Avoid polyester & nylon
- Use cotton sheets and sleepwear
- Exercise regularly
- Keep room temperature constant and use fans to circulate the air
- Slowly inhale for a count of 7 then exhale for a count of 9 during a hot flash
- Try doing yoga, getting acupuncture or other complementary therapies
- Discuss medication options with your doctor

## Joint Pain

A type of hormone therapy for breast cancer called an aromatase-inhibitor can cause joints aches and stiffness.

### Tips for managing:

- Exercise at least twice a week doing muscle strengthening and moderate aerobic activity. Examples are brisk walking, running, swimming and bicycling.
- Use over-the-counter pain relievers such as acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen (Advil), or naproxen (Aleve). Follow the directions on the box/bottle.

Call the clinic if your pain isn't relieved by trying these things. Your doctor may prescribe a medication or have you come in for a follow up visit.

## Sexual Changes

### Tips for managing:

#### **For WOMEN:**

- Vaginal dryness. Talk with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about medications/products that relieve vaginal dryness or a vaginal cream or suppositories to reduce the chance of infection.
- Pain with intercourse. Make an appointment to see your gynecologist or your PCP to be evaluated.
- Loss of interest in sex. Talk with a counselor or see a sex therapist.
- **If you are of childbearing age, use birth control anytime you have intercourse while taking hormone therapy.**

#### **For MEN:**

- Erectile dysfunction. Talk to your doctor about medication or treatments that may help.
- Loss of interest in sex. Talk with a counselor or see a sex therapist.

## Tips for Staying on Schedule with Hormone Therapy

Use a calendar. For example, write the name of the medication(s) on each day of the month and cross through it when you take it.

Take medication(s) at the same time every day so it becomes a habit. Try combining it with something you do every day, like brushing your teeth.

Use a pillbox with a compartment for each day of the week.

Use electronic reminders such as:

- Clock or cell phone alarms
- Timers
- Electronic pillboxes with alarms
- Download an app on a smartphone

Purchase a medication-dispensing machine

## **WVCI Resources**

### ***Nutrition Counseling Services***

Good nutrition before, during and after treatment helps build strength, maintain energy, overcome side effects and make your cancer treatment more successful. Our dietitian is here to answer your questions and to help develop an individualized plan of nutrition, diet and physical activity based on the most current research and your specific diagnosis, health history and treatment plan. Call 541-683-5001 to make an appointment.

### ***Oncology Support Services***

We understand that a cancer diagnosis and treatment often creates new life challenges, affecting relationships, employment and finances. WVCI is committed to caring for the whole patient during and after cancer diagnosis. WVCI's oncology social worker and oncology care manager are clinical professionals with extensive cancer training and experience who will partner with you and your family during and after diagnosis and treatment. Call 541-683-5001 to make an appointment.

### ***Patient Navigators***

A WVCI patient navigator serves as a guide, helping patients anticipate, address and overcome any challenges that may arise during the cancer treatment process, as well as coordinate services to improve the quality of care you'll receive. If you need assistance navigating the healthcare system contact 541-683-5001 to connect with one of our patient navigators.

### ***Financial Counseling***

At your initial visit, please bring insurance cards for your primary and any supplementary coverage. You may meet with one of our financial counselors to review cost estimates for your treatment, assist with financial assistance, set up payment arrangements and answer any questions. We file your insurance claims for you, so it's crucial that you inform us of any insurance changes. Call 541-683-5001 for assistance.

### ***Language Services***

Willamette Valley Cancer Institute and Research Center provides free language services to people whose primary language is not English, such as qualified interpreters and information in other languages. If you need these services, contact Support Services at 541-683-5001.

### *Clinical trials and research*

Through our partnership with The US Oncology Network, Willamette Valley Cancer Institute and Research Center provides many investigational drugs through clinical trials, so that patients have access to experimental treatments otherwise unavailable. If you're interested in participating in a trial, talk to your oncologist and they can help determine if you're a candidate.

### *Advance Care Planning*

Many of us have already prepared documentation, a Will, giving direction for dividing our property and assets after we die. Equally important, we should consider and talk with our loved ones about medical treatments we would or would not want if we were unable to direct our own healthcare. If you would like advance directives and assistance with care planning call our Oncology Support Services team at 541-683-5001.

### *Support groups*

Whether recently diagnosed, undergoing treatment, or managing your disease, we're here to support you and your loved ones every step of the way. At Willamette Valley Cancer Institute all support groups are free. For more information please call (541) 683-5001 or for a current list of WVCI and community support groups visit our website at [www.oregoncancer.com](http://www.oregoncancer.com).

### *Retail Pharmacy*

We have an excellent understanding of the medications you need to fight cancer. We also carry many other commonly prescribed medications. Delivering individualized, comprehensive pharmacy services is important to us. We work with your insurance company and help with copay assistance so that you can focus on what matters most – your treatment.

**Hours of Operation:** Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

**To contact us:** Please call 541-681-4948

**Location:** Country Club Road location, 520 Country Club Road, Eugene, OR 97401.

### *Integrative care*

During cancer treatment and beyond, we promote an integrative approach to health, incorporating mind and body wellness through complementary therapies, such as naturopathic medicine, acupuncture and survivorship support. For a list of our current community integrative care team visit [www.oregoncancer.com](http://www.oregoncancer.com) or ask your oncology team.

## Community Resources

### ***Oregon Cancer Foundation***

The Oregon Cancer Foundation empowers, strengthens and sustains those impacted by our community through education, support and financial assistance. Please contact the foundation at 541-632-3654 or visit [www.oregoncancerfoundation.org](http://www.oregoncancerfoundation.org) for more information on their Survivorship Series and other programs.

### ***American Cancer Society***

The American Cancer Society focuses on funding and conducting research, sharing expert information, supporting patients, and spreading the word about prevention.

### ***Believe Boutique***

Provides free wigs, hats, scarves and turbans to cancer patients. Items may vary depending on availability. Wigs are available by appointment only. Please call 541-632-3654 for additional information and to schedule an appointment.

### ***Positive Community Kitchen***

Positive Community Kitchen (PCK) provides direct support to people facing life threatening health challenges and supports long term prevention of disease. Every week volunteer teen and adult chefs & gardeners come together to prepare organic healing meals for community members fighting a life threatening illness. Call 541-249-4942 for more information.

### Reference:

National Cancer Institute. (2017). *Chemotherapy and You*. Retrieved from <https://www.cancer.gov/publications/patient-education/chemo-and-you>