

What does that word mean?

Doctors may use words that are hard to understand. It's okay to ask your doctor to slow down or explain things again in a way that makes sense to you.

adjuvant therapy	Treatments offered after surgery, such as chemotherapy and radiation therapy.
advanced cancer	Cancer that has grown a lot where it began or spread to other places in your body.
alopecia	Medical term for hair loss. This may be a side effect of chemotherapy.
anaemia	When blood does not carry enough red cells and oxygen to the rest of the body. It can make you feel very tired.
antiemetic	A medicine that helps reduce feelings of sickness (nausea) and vomiting.
benign	Not cancer. Does not invade or spread to other parts of the body. It can still grow and cause problems in the body.
biopsy	The removal of a small part of the lump or tumour, which is examined under a microscope to help diagnose disease.
blood test	Taking some blood, most often from a vein in the arm, by using a thin needle.
cancer	The name for more than 200 diseases where abnormal cells multiply and grow without control.
cancer care coordinator	Someone who works alongside you to organise your care and support you during treatment.
cancer in situ	Early-stage cancer. This usually means that the total cancer can be removed with surgery or biopsy. Also called localised cancer.
carcinoma	A tumour that starts in the cells of the skin and the body's organs.
chemotherapy (chemo)	Medicines that destroy cancer cells or slow their growth.

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You may have many questions about the cancer, its treatment and how it will affect you. Your doctor, nurse or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professional are there to listen. They can support you and answer any questions you may have.



clearance margins	The healthy tissue around a tumour that a surgeon removes to make sure all the cancer is gone.
complementary therapies	Therapies that can be used along with regular cancer treatments (e.g. massage, meditation, cultural medicine).
CT scan	A test that uses x-rays to create pictures inside the body so the doctor can check for cancer. Sometimes, a CT scan is combined with another type of scan called a PET scan.
curable	Cancer that can be treated and healed completely.
cycles	Chemotherapy is normally given for a period of time followed by rest period so the body can recover. This is called a cycle.
diagnosis	Working out what kind of cancer someone has.
dietitian	A health professional who helps with nutrition and diet.
endocrinologist	A doctor who specialises in conditions that involve hormones, such as diabetes, infertility or thyroid disease.
genes	Tiny parts in every cell that control how the body works.
genetics	The way a parent passes certain genes on to their children.
gynaecologist	A doctor for women's reproductive business.
haematologist	A specialist doctor who treats diseases in the blood and bone marrow.
immunotherapy	A treatment that uses your body's own immune system to help fight the disease.
incurable	A cancer that doesn't go away for good but can be managed for a period of time.
intravenous drip (IV drip)	An intravenous drip gives fluids directly into a vein. Generally the drip is put in your arm or hand.
leukaemia	A cancer that forms in the bloodstream (blood cancer).
lymphatic system	Part of the body's defence system that protects your body from sickness and disease.
lymph nodes or glands	Small, bean-shaped structures that help remove germs from the body. They are part of the lymphatic system.
lymphoedema	Swelling (oedema) of part of the body that can happen after cancer treatment. It can develop months after treatment.

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lymphoma	A cancer that forms in the lymphatic or the glandular system (glands) of the body.
malignant	Cancerous. Can spread to other parts of the body.
medical oncologist	A specialist doctor who uses medicines such as chemotherapy and hormone therapy to treat cancer.
metastasis	When cells from the cancer spread from one part of the body to another. Also called secondary cancer.
MRI scan	A way of taking pictures inside the body. A large, noisy machine is used.
mucositis	An inflammation of the lining of the mouth, throat or gut. It is common after cancer treatment.
multidisciplinary team (MDT)	A group of health professionals who work together to treat cancer.
nausea	Feeling like you are going to vomit (spew).
neurologist	A doctor for the brain and nervous system.
neutropenia	A low number of white cells in your blood. This increases the risk of infection. It may happen after chemotherapy.
oncologist	A doctor who specialises in treating cancer.
oncology	The study, diagnosis and treatment of cancer.
palliative care	Care and support for people with advanced cancer and their families. It focuses on easing symptoms and improving quality of life.
pathologist	A doctor who specialises in examining cancers under a microscope.
platelets	Cells in the blood that help your blood to clot. If you cut yourself, clotting helps the bleeding to stop.
primary site	Where the cancer first starts in the body.
prognosis	What is likely to happen when someone has a disease, especially their chance of getting better.
prosthesis	An artificial substitute for a missing body part such as an arm, leg or breast.
radiation oncologist	A specialist doctor who plans, prescribes and oversees radiation therapy.

WHAT DOES THAT WORD MEAN?

For more information visit:

Cancer Council
aboriginal.
cancercouncil.com.au

Menzies School of
Health Research
menzies.edu.au/cancer

radiation therapy	A common way to treat cancer. Uses high-energy rays to shrink or stop the cancer from getting bigger. Also called radiotherapy.
red cells	Cells in the blood that carry oxygen around the body.
sarcoma	A rare cancer that starts in parts of the body that hold or connect other parts, like bone, cartilage, fat and muscle.
staging	A process to tell how far the cancer has spread in the body. This is usually done by scans, x-rays or during surgery.
surgeon	A specialist doctor who removes cancer from the body.
surgery	An operation to remove or reduce cancer.
targeted therapy	Drugs that destroy certain parts of cancer cells to stop the cancer growing and spreading.
transplant	When you receive a body part, tissue or cells from a part of your own body or from another person.
tumour	A lump caused by uncontrolled growth of cells. Can be benign or malignant. Also called a neoplasm or mass.
tumour marker	A substance in your blood, urine or tissue that helps doctors to see if cancer is present.
ultrasound	A test that uses soundwaves to create a picture of part of the body, so doctors can work out if anything is wrong.
white cells	Cells in the blood that fight infections.
x-ray	A test that uses high-energy rays to take pictures inside of the body so doctors can check for cancer.

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This information was adapted for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by Menzies School of Health Research in consultation with a clinical advisory group and an Indigenous consultation group. Cancer Council NSW has updated this fact sheet in consultation with cancer experts and Aboriginal people with an experience of cancer. We thank all reviewers and acknowledge the generous sharing of cultural knowledge by: Leon Avuri-Williams, Ngambri man and Aboriginal Health Practitioner, Mid North Coast Local Health District, NSW; Lisa Fletcher, Ngarabul and Kamilaroi woman and Aboriginal Liaison Nurse, Mid North Coast Cancer Institute, NSW; Kirsty Glanville, Wiradjuri woman and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Service Design Lead, Cancer Council Australia; Allyra Hulme, Wiradjuri woman and National Indigenous Program Manager, IPEPA, Cancer and Palliative Care Outcomes Centre, Centre for Healthcare Transformation, Queensland University of Technology, QLD; Lucinda Hyde, Consumer and Aboriginal Health Worker, NSW; Kristy Stewart, Jaru woman and Consumer. We also thank A/Prof Martin Batstone, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon and Director of the Maxillofacial Unit, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, QLD.

This fact sheet features design elements from Cancer Council NSW's respect symbol, which was designed by Marcus Lee. Marcus was born and raised in Darwin, Northern Territory, and is a descendant of the Karajarri people. The Cancer Council Australia respect symbol (below) was designed by Riki Salam as part of his *Journey of Hope* artwork. Riki was born and raised in Cairns, Queensland, on Yidindji land, and has connections to Muralag, Kala Lagaw Ya, Meriam Mer and Kuku Yalanji peoples on his father's side and the Ngai Tahu people of New Zealand on his mother's side.



Cancer Council acknowledges Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and to Elders past and present.

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