



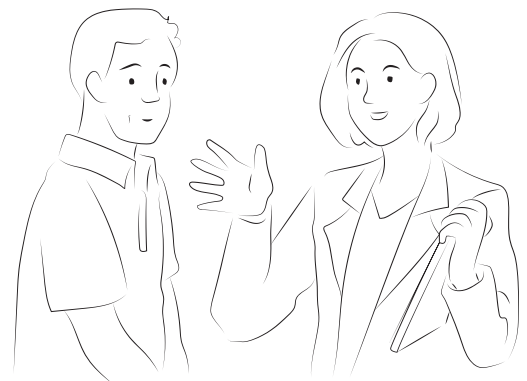
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You may already know about some of the treatment options available for cancer, such as surgery, chemotherapy, radiation or targeted therapy. With advances in science, there's now another way to treat certain cancers: immuno-oncology, or sometimes known as cancer immunotherapy.

'Immuno' in immuno-oncology refers to your immune system. Immuno-oncology uses drugs known as immunotherapies that target your body's immune system to help fight cancer.

This guide will help you understand cancer immunotherapy, and what you can do for the patient and yourself to improve the treatment experience.

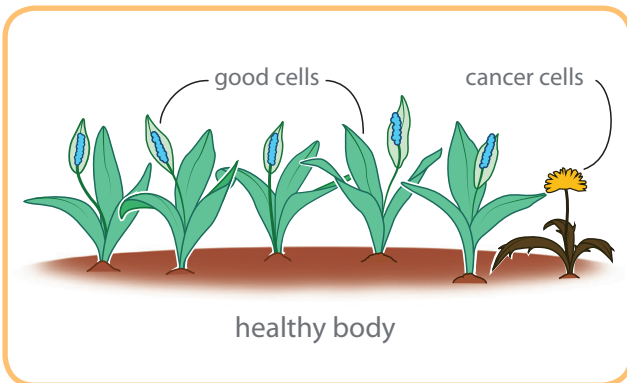
Keep this for your reference. We've provided space for you to take notes and write down any questions you may have as you read through the guide.



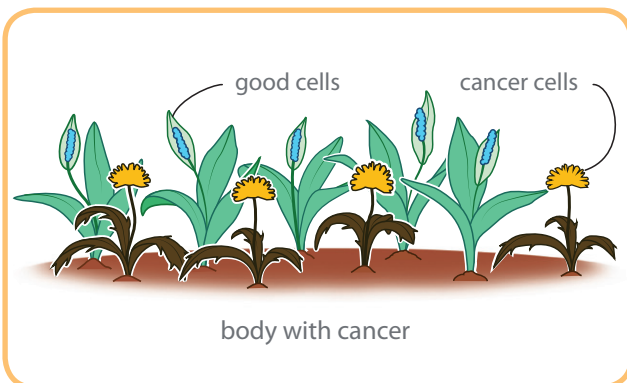
# How does immunotherapy work with the immune system to fight cancer?

Immunotherapy targets your body's own immune system to help fight cancer. Here's an analogy to explain the concept:

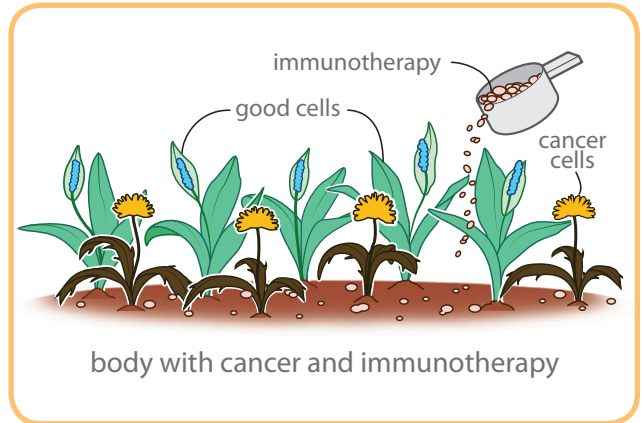
Imagine your body as a garden, where the soil is your immune system. When you're healthy, the soil is rich and well tended, and the garden is green. Normally, the soil is able to prevent weeds from growing out of control.



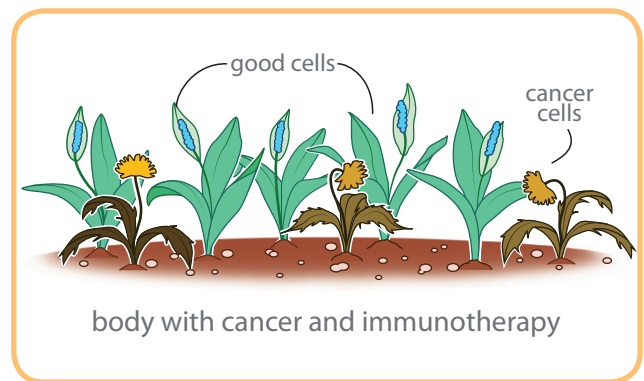
Cancer cells are like weeds in your garden. Sometimes the soil can allow weeds to grow and spread, and soon, the entire garden suffers as your plants compete for space and nutrients.



Immunotherapies are like adding weed-control fertilizer to the soil. It enriches the garden's existing soil.



Now the soil can help keep the weeds under control and can maintain the garden's health.



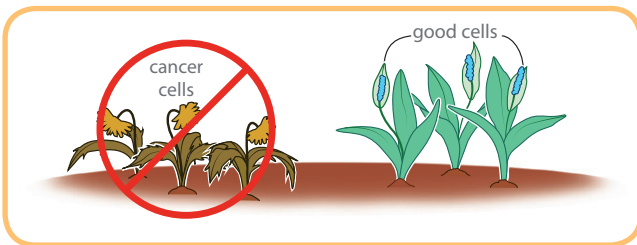
## NOTES

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# How is immunotherapy different from other types of cancer treatment?

Immunotherapy is a unique approach that uses the body's immune system to help fight cancer. To understand how immunotherapy is different from other treatments, let's revisit the garden analogy.

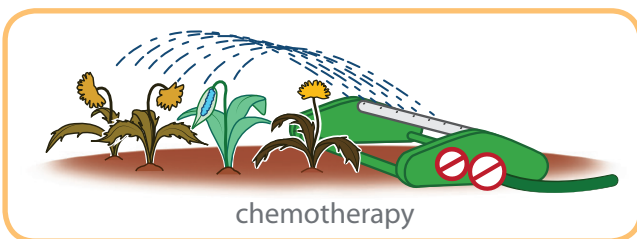
If the body is like a garden, the patient and care team will decide on how to remove the weeds (cancer cells) while doing a lesser amount of damage to the good plants (healthy cells).



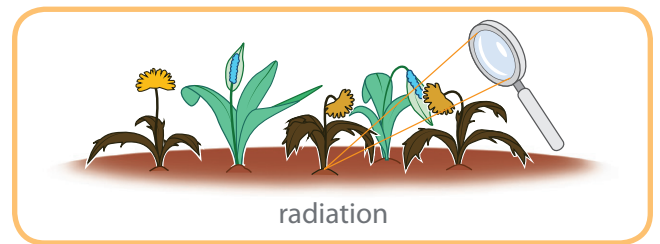
Surgery removes large patches of weeds and the soil around them, sometimes disturbing the good plants and leaving some weed roots behind.



Chemotherapy is like spraying a general weed killer on the whole garden. This approach may not kill all the weeds and may also harm some good plants.



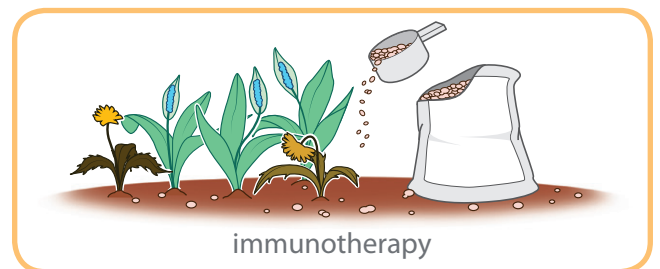
Radiation is like increasing the power of the sun with a magnifying glass to target and dry the weeds out, but in the process, some of the good plants can also be damaged.




With targeted therapy, weeds are directly sprayed with weed killer. Good plants may still be damaged.



Instead of targeting the weeds, immunotherapy is like adding a weed-control fertilizer to the soil. This fertilizer enriches the soil to help control weeds, which in turn restores the health of the garden. But too much fertilizer in the soil might harm the garden.



 Ask the healthcare team about the different treatment options available to the patient.



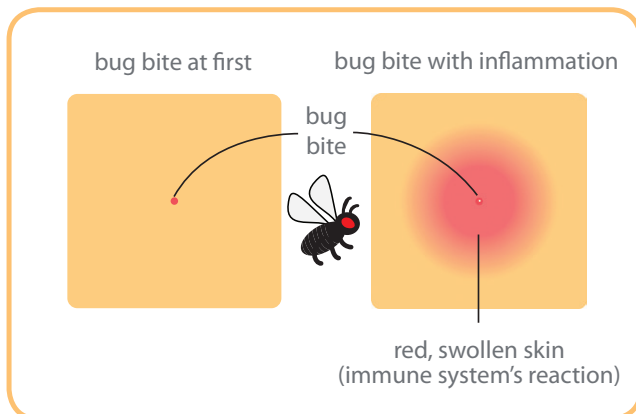
# How might the tumor respond to immunotherapy?

Tumors can respond differently to immunotherapy based on how well the immune system can target the cancer cells. For some people, immunotherapy can help shrink the tumor or slow its growth. For others, the cancer may still be detectable, but could no longer be actively growing.

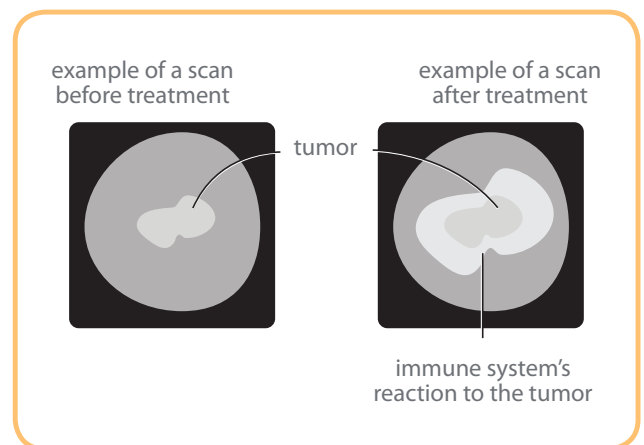
At follow-up appointments, the healthcare team will use scans to monitor treatment progress. In the scans, the tumor may appear the same, smaller or larger compared to before. If the tumor looks larger after a round of treatment, it may not always mean that immunotherapy isn't working.

Here's an analogy to explain why this could happen:

Think of a bug bite, where the skin becomes red, hot and swollen around the site of the bite. This is a sign of inflammation, which results from the immune system's reaction to the bite, not from the bite itself.



A similar thing could appear in the scans. If the immunotherapy is working, the immune system will react and move toward the tumor site to fight cancer. This can make the tumor look larger on scans.



If the tumor looks larger, it may be that the immune system is working on the tumor. However, in other cases, it could be that immunotherapy is not working, and the tumor is growing. Everyone responds to therapy differently.

Scans are not the only way to determine if the therapy is working. The healthcare team will also be looking at other lab results and the patient's overall well-being to monitor treatment progress.



**Check in with the patient to see how they are doing and let the healthcare team know of any changes.**

# What can I do as a caregiver?

As a caregiver, there are many ways to support the patient. Make sure the patient is comfortable with how you plan to help them. Check in with them often, as their needs may change over time.

## Talk with the patient

- Ask them how they're doing and keep an eye out for changes or symptoms
- Ask if they'd like help with day-to-day tasks, like chores

## Help with appointments

- Remind the patient to attend appointments
- Arrange transportation to and from appointments
- Offer to accompany them to appointments
- Call ahead to confirm the appointments, and find out what you need to bring
- Take notes or ask to record the conversation (sometimes the amount of information received at each appointment can be overwhelming)
- Ask all the questions that come to mind

## Don't forget you are human

- Take the time to do activities you enjoy
- Make time for yourself
- Tune in to how you are feeling
- Ask for help if you feel overwhelmed

## Appointment checklist

- Bring a pen and notepad.
- Write down any questions you have in advance.
- Mark the date and time on a calendar.
- Make any necessary arrangements for traveling to and from the appointment.

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## Important contact information

Nurse .....

Oncologist .....

Therapist .....

Support group .....

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## What can I do to cope?

Supporting a loved one with cancer can be demanding. Your emotional well-being is extremely important. There are many ways for you to take care of your emotional health, like:

- Talking to the patient
- Talking to the healthcare team
- Talking to friends and family
- Talking to a counselor
- Finding local or online support groups
- Finding time for yourself
- Setting aside quiet time
- Journaling
- Going for a walk
- Getting fresh air
- Meditating
- Exercising
- Resting

It is common for caregivers to seek support from other people. If there are aspects of your role that you are uncomfortable discussing with those closest to you, consider speaking with others in your community, such as:

- The healthcare team
- Fellow caregivers or patients
- Support groups
- Therapists
- A religious advisor

As a caregiver, it is important to remember that you have emotional needs as well. You can share your feelings even if the person in your care does not want to.

### Reflect

Take a look at the questions below to see how you can expand your support network:

**Do you talk to others about yourself or your situation?**

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always

**Do you have someone to confide in or talk to about yourself or your situation?**

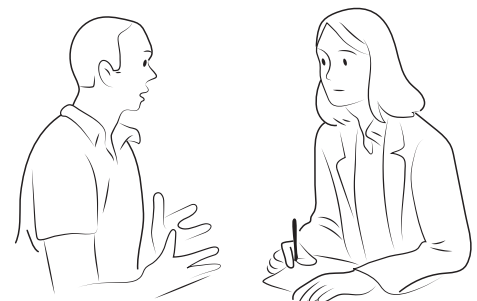
Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always

**Do you have someone who will listen to you when you need to talk?**

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always



**The healthcare team knows this is a difficult time for you. Feel free to approach them to request additional help. They may be able to introduce you to other caregiver resources in your area.**





# Is it normal to feel this way?

Caring for someone diagnosed with cancer is an emotional time. The feelings you are having are a normal part of becoming a caregiver.

Sometimes we can cope with these feelings on our own, but other times we need help from others. Remember that you're human too and not just a caregiver.

Identifying how you are feeling is the first step to taking care of yourself. Periodically, take a look at the questions on the next page to help you dial into how you are feeling.

Feel free to make copies of this page.



**Consider sharing the next page with someone to start a conversation. Discussing your feelings and concerns can help others understand how they can help you.**

## Reflect

*In the past 7 days:*

### **I felt worried...**

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always

### **I felt afraid...**

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always

### **I felt angry...**

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always

### **I felt helpless...**

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always

### **I felt guilty...**

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always

### **I felt in denial...**

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always

### **I felt sad...**

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always

### **I felt hopeful...**

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always

### **I felt optimistic...**

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always

### **I felt energetic...**

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always

### **I felt happy...**

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always

### **I felt empowered...**

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always

### **I felt grateful...**

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always

### **I felt \_\_\_\_\_**

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always







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