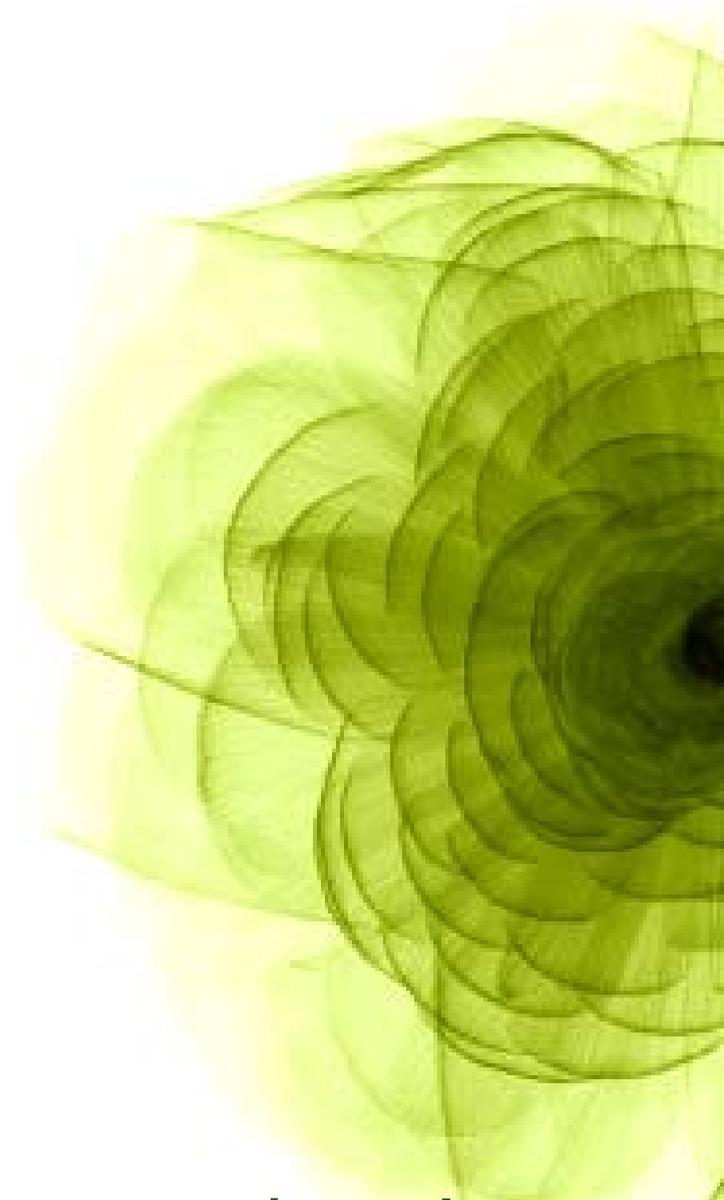




Your resource for life.

MaineGeneral

Harold Alfond Center for Cancer Care



medical oncology

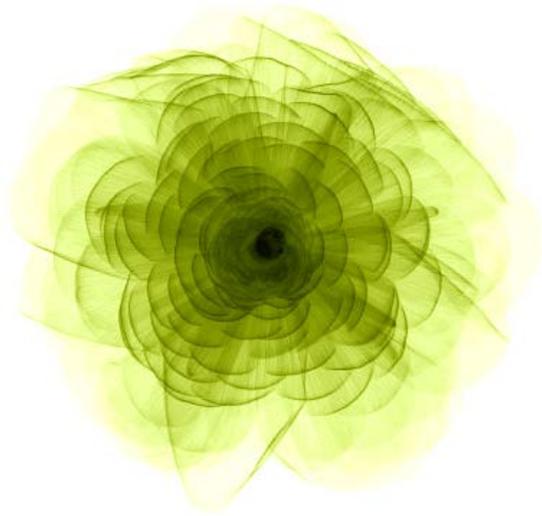


Your resource for life.

MaineGeneral

Harold Alfond Center for Cancer Care

361 Old Belgrade Road
Augusta, ME 04330
207.000.0000



RANUNCULUS–Garden varieties

(1) Ranunculus ficaria (2) Ranunculaceae

Flowers lining the garden paths, leading to a secret, private oasis...a meditative enclave... a garden bench for conversation. Designed to promote health and wellness, as they are able, patients can receive treatment in the gardens, offering a therapeutic approach to nature.

Our renowned staff of medical oncologists and nurses, matched with state-of-the-art technology, provides the best possible cancer care available anywhere, right here, close to home, in the Kennebec Valley region.

This can be an especially difficult time and we want to do all we can to make you as comfortable as possible. Our experienced and caring team of health care professionals is here to work with you and your family throughout your treatment and recovery. We provide support and answer any questions you might have about your illness, treatments, and follow-up care. Our mission is to provide quality multidisciplinary care to meet the needs of cancer patients and their families. We provide these services with respect for the dignity and the uniqueness of each patient.

What is Medical Oncology?

Medical oncology is cancer treatment using medicine, chemotherapy or biotherapy (as opposed to radiation). Comprised of nationally recognized specialists in oncology, hematology and internal medicine, together with compassionate, highly-trained nurses, we provide the best course of treatment available to meet your need. This may include regular visits to assess a slow growing or stable disease, or more aggressive treatment involving chemotherapy or biotherapy. In some instances chemotherapy is administered in conjunction with radiation to maximize results. We also provide extensive care and treatment for our hematology (blood)patients.

Maintaining your normal lifestyle is vital to your treatment.

The ability to continue your daily routine is a vital part of your treatment. Our entire staff is committed to helping you manage your symptoms and side effects to create a superior quality of life. Through clinical assessment, nutritional support, emotional support, and pain management, we will help you maintain your normal lifestyle.

For your convenience, we encourage you to pre-register before you arrive to reduce the necessary paperwork. Simply contact our Call Center at 626-1583 in Augusta or call toll-free 800-343-3400. You may also pre-register online at www.maine-general.org. If you have more than one visit every two weeks, you will not need to register before each appointment. If your appointments are less than once a month, your provider will notify you when to register. Once you arrive, please check in with one of our receptionists available to assist you.

Patient Care

At your first visit all your pertinent insurance information, referral letters, forms, cards, etc., will be collected at the reception desk. Complete information will prevent potential billing problems and the subsequent stress that results. After this initial registration, you should not need to present any further information, but we do need to know if your insurance or billing information changes during treatment.



If you are scheduled for lab work or x-rays, this will be done about 30 minutes prior to your visit. This allows time for nursing assessment and lab results to be processed in time for your appointment with the oncologist. After you register and complete any necessary lab work, a nurse or therapist will do a brief medical history: medications, allergies, past surgeries and review of symptoms. He or she will take your vital signs: blood pressure, pulse rate, temperature, and weight. If you have any questions at any time, please ask. At each visit we will update your medication list and medical history. It is important for you to bring an accurate, up-to-date list of your prescriptions, vitamins, over-the-counter medications, as well as the dosages, to every visit. The nurse can give you a medication “pocket card” where you can write your medications and make changes.

Please bring a friend or family member to your physician consultations. This support is immeasurable.

You should be as comfortable as possible, so at each visit you will be asked to rate any discomfort you may be experiencing on a scale of 0 (no pain) to 10 (worst pain). If you are taking pain medication, we will ask you to rate the amount of pain after taking the medication. This allows us to evaluate the effectiveness of the treatment and make any adjustments necessary.

After your initial evaluation with the nurse, you will see your physician, who will review test and lab results, discuss your medical history and present symptoms, and perform a physical examination. Your doctor will discuss treatment options and develop a plan of care. Of course, you will have a chance to ask questions. Often, patients find it helpful to have a family member or friend sit in on the discussion. Feel free to write down your questions ahead of time so you address all of your concerns during your appointment.



Patient Education

Learning about your disease and treatment empowers you to manage your illness, as well as communicate with your doctor and nurses how you are feeling and how you are responding to therapy.

Before you begin treatment, your oncologist and nurse will provide the information to make knowledgeable decisions about your own care. Discussion, printed materials, videos and websites are valuable information sources. We will provide patients with special needs any appropriate aids for learning. All questions about your disease or therapy are welcome any time during your treatment; please don't hesitate to ask.

Your Treatment

You and your oncologist will determine the best treatment schedule for your illness. Whenever possible our staff will accommodate your work and family schedule. If you need to change an appointment, please speak to the nurse and physician who are treating you.

Medical oncology treatments may be brief injections or infusions, which may take a few hours and in a few cycles. A cycle includes the actual treatment phase followed by a period of recovery. For most patients treated in our clinic, the experience is much easier than expected. Great detail was taken in designing this facility to promote health, well-being, calmness and comfort in a soothing environment. You are free to watch videos, read, listen to music, make a puzzle, nap, or visit with nurses, other patients, or family. Coffee, juices, snacks and lunch are available.



You are the most important member of your patient care team.

The treatment area design offers a quiet peaceful setting for all of our patients. We offer private rooms for patients who want to be alone, lay down, or desire more space for family members. Please be aware that guests and visitors with colds or other infections are strongly discouraged, as they are a health risk to you and other patients.

During your treatment please talk to us and let us know how you feel. How you feel and what you think about our services really matters to us. We want to help so please ask us if there is anything, you need we will accommodate anything feasible to make your stay as comfortable as possible.

Ongoing Visits with Your Oncologist

Your medical oncologist will closely follow your treatment and see you regularly to keep you consistently updated on your therapy and progress. Often, the medical oncologist includes a physician assistant in your care. Together they closely monitors your care to provide necessary medical support. If at any time you have questions or concerns and need more time during the appointment, please call ahead so we can be sure to designate enough time. When treatments are completed, your oncologist will to see you on a regular basis to continually monitor your health and treat any complications that may arise.

Side Effects and Symptom Management

Although treatment for side effects is much more effective than in the past, some chemotherapy patients may still experience nausea, diarrhea, fever, and lack of appetite, fatigue or mouth sores. We work closely with you to avoid and remedy all side effects as soon as possible. It is important to keep us informed of all side effects, regardless how small, so we can help keep you as comfortable as possible.

Nutrition and emotional support are an intricate part of well-being. We are here to help you with dietician evaluations and support groups, feel free to ask at anytime.

Prescriptions

You may take your regularly prescribed medications while you have treatment. [?] Please tell the oncology staff about all of your medications, including vitamins and over-the-counter drugs, so they may be listed in your medical chart. An accurate record of your medications and supplements is required to make sure your medications are compatible, and helps us when changes are necessary.

Most prescription refills can be called in to your local pharmacy. Narcotic medications require written prescriptions and need to be picked up in the office. Calling the office a day or two before the prescription runs out, holidays, vacations, or a long weekend, ensures you will always have a supply of important medication. The prescription refill telephone number is 207.626.1496.

Nutrition

Good nutrition is an important part of the healing process. Your nurse and oncologist will monitor your weight and evaluate any side effects contributing to weight loss. In addition, we offer comprehensive nutrition assessments and evaluations, diet education and nutritional counseling. Our dietitian can also develop, and help you manage, a supplemental nutrition plan.



Support Groups

Many Cancer Support Groups are offered at the Harold Alfond Center for Cancer Care. These groups are community and hospital based, run by professionals who work with our Social Work or Care Management Department. All adults who are coping with cancer — you, a family member, or friend — are invited to take part. There is no fee and you may attend as often or as little as you wish. Ask any staff member for more information and a schedule of meeting times and dates.

Many cancers are curable, and many, many more are treatable and manageable.

Commonly Asked Questions

Can I be cured?

Many cancers are curable, and many, many more are manageable. Your oncology doctor will discuss the details of your specific illness that will affect the outcome of your treatments.

Is chemotherapy painful?

Chemotherapy does not cause pain. In fact, if you have pain during the administration of intravenous chemotherapy you must tell the nurse, as this should not occur. The needle may be moved for comfort to a different location.

Can I eat and drink?

You certainly can. We recommend a light breakfast before coming to the clinic in the morning. We provide snacks, drinks and a lunch for our patients receiving treatment. It is rare for patients to be nauseated during treatment.

Can I have an alcoholic drink with dinner?

Alcohol can worsen the side effects, so please discuss this with your oncologist before drinking alcohol.

Will I have side effects from the chemotherapy?

Most medications, including chemotherapy and biotherapy, have potential side effects or unwanted symptoms caused as a result of taking the prescribed drug as part of your treatment. Your nurse will spend ample time discussing side effects that are common to all cancer therapies, and specific side effects associated with your individual treatment.

The side effects of anti-cancer drugs do not affect everyone: you may experience little or no side effects, and some patients have many. Factors influencing side effects include the duration on a certain drug, the patient's general health, the dose of the drug, the frequency of the drug, how it is administered, and/or the combination of a particular drug with other anti-cancer drugs.

The side effects may be unpleasant and occasionally difficult. The side effects tend to be short term and slowly disappear when treatments are completed. The oncology staff will work closely with you to do everything possible to minimize the effects of the drugs, and to support you if the side effects become more serious.

What if I have a problem at night or on the weekends?

We are here for you. If there is an emergency situation after the normal working hours of 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. please call our answering service at 207.626.1496 and they will contact your oncologist or the physician-on-call to assist you. If you are in need of immediate care, report directly to the nearest hospital Emergency Department.

How am I charged for these services?

Patients seen in the Medical Oncology department will receive two separate bills:

Hospital: The hospital bill covers such things as use of the rooms, machines and technical services. The hospital will bill you periodically throughout your treatment. If you have questions about the hospital portion of your bill you may call: 1-877-255-4680 or 872-4680.

Physician: You will also receive a bill periodically from Physician Associates for physician services throughout your treatment. If you have questions about the physician portion of your bill you may call 1-800-287-6034.

Co-payments: Insurance co-payments are due at the time of your visit. Your insurance coverage will dictate your co-payment amount.

Insurance Information: We will submit your bill to both primary and secondary insurances.

If you have managed care insurance coverage you will need a referral and authorization from your primary care physician before starting your consultation or treatments.

Financial Assistance: If you have no insurance, case managers and social workers can help you apply for any available financial assistance. Patients may qualify for MaineCare (Medicaid) or MaineGeneral’s uncompensated care services program. Our Care Partners program may also be able to help and can be reached in Augusta at 626-1684 or in Waterville at 872-4687.



Your resource for life.
MaineGeneral
Harold Alfond Center for Cancer Care

Appointment Card Medical Oncology
Augusta, Maine 04330 Telephone: 207.626.1496

HAS AN APPOINTMENT ON

| | | |
|-----|-------|------|
| DAY | MONTH | DATE |
| AT | AM | PM |