

Tumor Board Conference

For Cancer Treatments



Centre hospitalier affilié
universitaire

A University-Affiliated
Hospital Centre

St. Mary's Hospital Center • Cancer Care Program

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As part of our multidisciplinary expert care, we hold a Tumour Board meeting each week to discuss the treatment of individual patients entering our program. Specialists from many areas are present to discuss all details of the patient's care.

It is the interaction between these specialists that allows us to make personalized treatment plans for each patient. Our multidisciplinary approach offers highly comprehensive, coordinated cancer care.

Your appointment for Tumour Board has probably already been scheduled; this information pamphlet will help you understand what to expect from this meeting.

What is the Tumour Conference?

The Tumour Board is a committee, which develops a treatment planning approach for each patient. Doctors and other professionals, who are experts in different specialties, review and discuss the medical condition and treatment options of the patient. In cancer treatment, the group of experts may include medical oncologists (specialized doctors in treatment of cancer), surgical oncologists (doctors who provide cancer treatment with surgery), radiation oncologists (doctors who provide cancer treatment with radiation), palliative care doctor (doctor who deals with symptom control and quality of life) and a pathologist (a doctor who specializes in interpreting laboratory tests, and evaluates cells, tissues, and organs to diagnose disease). A cancer care pharmacist is also present, as well as some nurses from the team. The ultimate goal of the Tumour Board is to find the best possible treatment plan for the patient.

What happens during a Tumour Conference presentation?

During the Tumour Board, the facts about the patient and his or her cancer are presented by the patient's oncologist; this is followed by presentations by members of the medical, radiation, surgical oncology, and pathology teams. The Tumour Board significantly focuses on the patient's treatment options so that the best treatment plans available can be offered to the patient.

The Tumour Board's diagnostic and treatment recommendations often replace a second opinion that the patient may have been considering seeking. The Tumour Board expertise can help point a patient in the right direction, especially for complex situations, and may save the patient the time and expense of travelling to another hospital. However, the Tumour Board recommendations do not substitute for a second opinion, and patients who would like to get a second opinion are encouraged to do so.

The Tumour Board meets once a week, at which time approximately seven to ten patients are presented. Patients are welcome to bring a family member or friend for support.

What is the patient's role during the Tumour Conference?

When you come for your Tumour Board appointment, you will be greeted by our Cancer Care receptionist at the registration desk, who will take some personal information to proceed with your registration. You will then be asked to wait in the waiting room until a health care professional comes to get you. You will join him in an office, where you will have the time to discuss the Tumour Board process and ask questions.

At the time of your appointment, a nurse will escort you to the Tumour Board examination room and you will change into a hospital gown. The Tumour Board team, having completed the discussions described above, will come in to see you (the medical team present may include 10-15 people). You will be asked a few general questions, and in some cases a brief exam will be conducted.

After their visit, you will be asked to return to the waiting room until your appointment time with your oncologist. At that time, your oncologist will explain the recommendations of the Tumour Board and you will be able to ask questions. Following your discussion with your oncologist, appropriate appointments will be made to implement the treatment plan agreed upon. You can expect to have many other appointments as your treatment plan gets underway: a follow-up visit with your oncologist, a visit with one of the Cancer Care pharmacists, your first treatment appointment, etc.