

## Cancer Diagnosis and Treatment

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Cancer occurs when a cell grows and divides in an abnormal way. There are many different types of cancer and these cancer cells may start in different places in the body. There is nothing you or your child could have done to prevent cancer. In general, we do not know what causes childhood cancers. Cancer is rarely inherited from family members.

Depending on the type of cancer, treatment may include: surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, biotherapy, and hematopoietic stem cell transplant.

### Treatment Decisions:

- A diagnosis is made once test results are back. This may take several days or sometimes weeks. A team of providers specializing in this disease will then meet with you to offer a recommendation for the best treatment for your child's type of cancer.
- An oncologist will explain the treatment in detail and discuss this plan with you. This can be a difficult time as it is necessary to inform you of all the potential risks and side effects, even the very unlikely ones that may occur.
- Treatment is started after guardians or patients over 18 years old have signed a consent (a legal document).
- Some children may be treated on a protocol that is part of a clinical trial. Clinical trials evaluate specific treatments for particular types of cancer and allow new and better treatments to be determined.

### Contact Us

**For patient care assistance, please call the following phone numbers:**

- Jimmy Fund Clinic (617) 632-3270  
Business Hours 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday
- Page Operator (617) 632-3352  
Off hours: weekdays after 5 p.m., holidays, and weekends  
Page pediatric hematology/oncology fellow on call
- Life Threatening Emergencies dial 911