## SAINT PETER'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Treating you better...for life.

# The Role of Rehabilitation in Cancer Care

Rehabilitation is an essential part of cancer care, helping people manage the physical, emotional, and psychological challenges that come with cancer diagnosis and its treatment.



Cancer rehabilitation is similar to the physical rehabilitation one might need after a stroke, orthopedic surgery, or injury such as a car accident. It includes a multidisciplinary approach that deploys services from physical, occupational, and speech therapists, as well as nutritionists and mental health professionals. These services are tailored to meet the needs of patients with cancer and, when used in combination, can help reduce the side effects of cancer treatments and improve a patient's quality of life.

Cancer and its treatments can cause issues such as pain, fatigue, weakness, and mobility challenges. Rehabilitation professionals help patients manage these issues with personalized treatment plans. Common problems include:

- Pain: Cancer-related pain can make daily activities difficult to execute. Rehabilitation can help manage and reduce pain through various techniques and therapies designed to alleviate discomfort and improve mobility.
- Fatigue: Cancer treatments often cause extreme tiredness.

  Rehabilitation helps patients to build stamina and manage energy levels through tailored exercise programs and energy conservation techniques.
- **Mobility and Strength:** Physical therapy improves strength, flexibility, and movement, helping patients stay independent after treatment. Therapists use specific exercises to target weakened muscles and improve overall function.
- **Cognitive Issues:** Chemotherapy can affect one's memory and concentration. Rehabilitation includes cognitive exercises and strategies to improve mental function and help patients cope with these changes.
- **Speech and Swallowing:** Some cancer treatments can affect speech and swallowing. Speech, language, and swallowing therapy can help patients regain these abilities through targeted exercises and techniques to improve muscle coordination and strength.
- **Pelvic Floor Rehabilitation:** Pelvic floor rehabilitation is a special type of physical therapy that helps men and women with pelvic floor issues. These problems can include urinary or bowel incontinence, frequent urination, constipation, and pelvic pain. Pelvic floor therapy involves exercises to strengthen these muscles and improve function.
- Lymphedema: A condition causing swelling due to lymph fluid buildup in tissues beneath the skin, lymphedema often results from cancer treatments that damage or remove lymph vessels and nodes. Specialized lymphedema therapists use techniques to reduce swelling, enhance limb function and mobility, and provide patients with education on managing symptoms.

"Lymphedema is a common complication associated with breast cancer, especially following surgery and radiation therapy. I urge my patients to monitor for signs of swelling and seek medical intervention as soon as possible if they notice any changes or discomfort," said Lisa Hopkins, MD, breast surgeon with Astera Cancer Care, who sees patients at Saint Peter's Breast Center.

"With cancer rehabilitation services, many patients are likely to be able to return to the life they love. Follow-ups ensure that any new issues are identified and managed promptly, allowing for early intervention and better outcomes," said Henry K. Tsai, MD, of Astera Cancer Care, chair of Radiation Oncology at Saint Peter's University Hospital. "Early intervention is the key to preventing complications, managing symptoms, and enhancing recovery after cancer."



#### **Cancer Care and Survivorship**

"Survivorship focuses on supporting patients beyond their initial cancer treatment. It's about keeping them healthy, making sure they enjoy life, and helping them get back to doing their normal activities," said Bonnie Saunders, PT, DPT, MPA, manager, Physical Rehabilitation Services, Saint Peter's University Hospital.



Survivorship begins at the time of diagnosis and continues throughout a person's life. It often involves a range of services designed to help individuals live well beyond their cancer treatment such as:

- Managing Long-term Effects: Treatments like chemotherapy and radiation can have long-lasting impacts. Survivorship care addresses these effects, which can include fatigue, pain, and cognitive changes. Specialized programs help patients manage these long-term side effects and improve their day-to-day functioning.
- Emotional and Psychological Support: A cancer diagnosis and treatment can be emotionally taxing. Survivorship programs offer counseling and support groups to help patients cope with anxiety, depression, and the emotional toll of their journey. These services provide a safe space for patients to share their experiences and receive support from others who understand their challenges.
- Healthy Lifestyle Guidance: Survivors receive advice on nutrition, physical activity, and other healthy behaviors to improve their overall wellbeing and reduce the risk of other health issues. Guidance on maintaining a balanced diet, engaging in regular exercise, and avoiding harmful behaviors like smoking can help survivors lead healthier lives.
- **Rehabilitation Services:** Physical, occupational, and speech therapy are often part of survivorship care, helping individuals regain strength, mobility, and function.
- **Social Support:** Navigating life after cancer can be challenging. Survivorship care includes resources and support for returning to work, managing finances, and dealing with social and family dynamics. Programs may offer vocational counseling, financial planning assistance, and support groups to help patients adjust to life after cancer.
- Monitoring and Follow-up: Regular check-ups are essential to detect any signs of cancer recurrence and to monitor for long-term side effects of treatment.

### Saint Peter's University Hospital Recognized for Excellence in Emergency Nursing

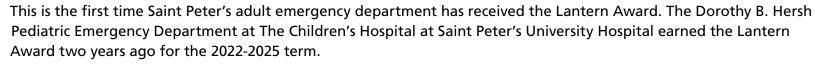
Saint Peter's University Hospital's adult emergency department – the Robert and Joan Campbell Adult Emergency Department – has been selected as a recipient of the Emergency Nurses Association's 2024 Lantern Award for demonstrating excellence in leadership, practice, education, advocacy, and research performance.

The Lantern Award showcases Saint Peter's emergency department's accomplishments in incorporating evidence-based practice and innovation into emergency care. As part of the application, emergency departments are encouraged to share stories that highlight a commitment to patient care, as well as the well-being of nursing staff. The award serves as a visible symbol of Saint Peter's commitment to quality, safety, and a healthy work environment.



"Receiving the Lantern Award from the Emergency Nurses Association is a significant achievement for our team. It reflects our pursuit of excellence in emergency care and our dedication to ensuring the safety and well-being of our patients and staff," said Sharon Haskins, DNP, MBA, RN, RN-BC, NE-BC, director

of Medical/Surgical Services, Adult Critical Care, Emergency Services, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, and Bed Management at Saint Peter's University Hospital.





"This recognition is a testament to the commitment and hard work of our emergency department staff. We are all devoted to providing exceptional patient care and maintaining a supportive and collaborative work environment," said Deep Desai, DO, chair of Emergency Medicine at Saint Peter's University Hospital.

To learn more about Saint Peter's Emergency Department, visit saintpetershcs.com/emergency.

#### **Community Calendar**

For more information or to register for a program, call the contact number listed or visit saintpetershcs.com/events. Most programs are FREE unless noted; please call for information.

#### Cancer Support

**Bone Marrow Transplant** 

For patients who have had an allogeneic transplant Call for information: 732.235.8522

**Breast Cancer** 

Call for information: 732.235.7011

**Gynecologic Cancer** 

In partnership with the Cancer Support Community Central NJ **Call for information: 732.235.6792** 

**Living with Cancer** 

Call for information: 732.235.7557

#### Diabetes Education\*

For information about classes. call the numbers listed below.

**Diabetes Self-Management** 

Call for information: 732.339.7630

**Gestational Diabetes** Self-Management Education\* Call for information: 732.339.7630

**Prevent T2 Program Call for information and** registration: 732.339.7772

Some parenting classes are being held online. Register at saintpetershcs.com/ParentEducation. Once registered for a class, access information will be provided to you. For information about the following classes, please call Parent Education at 732.745.8579.

**Baby Care Birth Center** 

(for moms under midwifery care) **Breastfeeding** 

Class Grandparents

Hypnobirthing

**New Daddy** Class

**Prenatal Yoga/ Exercise Class** 

**Prepared** Childbirth/ **Lamaze Classes Sibling Class** 

**Spinning Babies** 

#### Parent Support

Registration is required. Visit saintpetershcs.com/ParentEducation or call 732.745.8579.

**Breastfeeding Support Group** 1st Tuesday of each month Next meeting: September 3 • 1 pm

**New Moms Support Group** "Life Will Never Be The Same"

1st Tuesday of each month Next meeting: September 3 • 12 pm

#### Support Groups

**Bariatric Behavioral Health** Support

Every Wednesday • 5 – 7 pm Call 732.745.8600, x6634 for Zoom meeting information • Meetings conducted in English and Spanish

**Bariatric Nutrition Support** 

2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month Next meeting: September 12 • 6 – 7 pm Call 732.339.7450 for Zoom meeting information

**Bereavement** 

**Call Pastoral Care for information:** 732.745.8565

**Craniofacial Teen Girls Call for information:** 732.745.8600, x8113

**MyGoal Autism Family** 

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month Next meeting: September 8 • 3 pm Call 877.886.9462 or email info@mygoalautism.org for virtual meeting information

#### **SHARE**

3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month Next meeting: September 19 • 7 – 9 pm Call 732.745.8522 or email imariano@saintpetersuh.com for Zoom link

**Spouse/Partner Caregiver** Support

**Call for information:** 732.745.8600, x8653

The Craniofacial & Neurosurgical **Center at The** Children's **Hospital** at Saint Peter's University **Hospital treats** conditions such as cleft lip and cleft palate.



2024-2027

For age eligibility and clinic locations and dates, visit saintpetershcs.com/covidvaccine

Saint Peter's Virtual **Urgent Care** 

Monday - Friday 5 to 10 p.m.

**Saturday & Sunday** 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.



saintpetershcs.com/virtualurgentcare

Need a doctor? To find a Saint Peter's physician, visit saintpetershcs.com/findaphysician.
Online scheduling is also available with select Saint Peter's Healthcare System physicians via Zocdoc at BookMySPDoc.com This calendar is for information only. Do not rely on it to make healthcare decisions on your own; instead, talk with your healthcare provider for advice and treatment. Do not ignore medical advice or delay seeking it because of something you read here. We do not suggest or endorse that you have any tests, use products, or use other information in this document without advice from your healthcare provider.













































