DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (DAP)

PATIENT REVIEWED
PATIENT APPROVED

What to Expect in the DAP

- Common Tests
- What to Expect at your Specialist Appointment
- Waiting for Tests, Results & Appointments
- Appointment Tracker

Dear Patients, Families and Friends,

cancer care ontario

erie st.clair regional cancer program

Welcome to the Diagnostic Assessment Program or DAP.

Your health care provider has referred you to our DAP. The reason is to find out more about the problem you are having. We know that waiting during this time is difficult. Feeling anxious and wondering what to expect is common too. Don't despair. Our DAP will give you the support you need. We are here and ready to help.

You will have received a call from your Nurse Navigator. This is an experienced health care professional. They are there for you and will help you understand things. Your Navigator will get you the tests you need and coordinate the best care for you. They will answer your questions, give information, and support you and your family through the diagnostic process.

To help prepare you for the days to come, we have created this guide for you. Please use it and come back to it as needed. In it you will find common tests and contact numbers. You will also find information about what to expect and your schedule of tests. We have also given you 'tips' to help make the waiting a little easier.

We invite you to take an active part in your care. Ask questions and contact your Navigator when you need them. They can be reached Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm by calling 519-254-5577 extension 58502.

On behalf of all staff, we want the very best for you and will do our best to make it happen.

Sincerely,

Claudia den Boer Grima
Regional Vice President

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About the DAP

The Diagnostic Assessment Program is coordinated by the Erie St. Clair Regional Cancer Program. At this time, the program has three DAPs: Lung, Colorectal and Prostate. Each DAP has a Nurse Navigator who works in the Cancer Centre at Windsor Regional Hospital. One of the goals of the DAP is to make sure the right test is done at the right time. To make sure this happens, a Nurse Navigator will arrange the tests, procedures and appointments you need, so a doctor can diagnose a problem or symptom as quickly as possible.

The DAP program improves the coordination of diagnostic services available in the community. This can mean that tests and appointments take place at different locations. The Nurse Navigator will try to schedule things so that travel time and distance are kept short for patients and families.

With your permission, all doctors involved in your care are informed about the tests and appointments being planned. The DAP also keeps track of wait times and other information so the program can continue to improve. Any data gathered by the DAP does not identify patients. It is used only for evaluating how well the program is working. Your confidentiality is maintained at all times.

DAPs work with the many specialists involved in the diagnosis of a problem or symptom. They also work closely with facilities and hospitals across the region. All family doctors or Primary Health Care Providers within the Erie St. Clair region can send patients to the DAP.

A DAP helps patients with many different Lung, Colorectal, or Prostate symptoms or problems. It is important to remember that not everyone sent to the program will be diagnosed with cancer.

Common Tests

The type of test arranged for you depends on the symptoms and problems you are having. It also depends on the results of other tests you have had. Here are some common tests that are arranged by the DAP:

Laboratory Tests (Blood Work)

Blood tests are needed to give the specialist a general review of things like:

- your electrolytes
- blood counts
- liver and kidney function

If this blood work was not done before being sent to the DAP, the Nurse Navigator may ask your family doctor to order them before your specialist appointment.

Blood work takes a few minutes to complete.

Chest X-Ray

A chest x-ray involves passing of an x-ray beam (a form of radiation like light or radio waves) through the chest. This beam makes a general picture or image of the chest and puts it on a film or computer. A chest x-ray can include the heart, lungs, airway, blood vessels and bones of the spine or chest. During the x-ray, you will:

- be asked to stand against an imaging plate
- have two pictures or views taken:
  one from the back and one from the front

If an x-ray film has already been done, the Nurse Navigator may ask you to bring it to your appointment. To do this, you will need to contact the place where you

had the x-ray taken. If the x-ray is on a CD, the specialist can usually view it off the CD in their office. The Nurse Navigator will help you with this.

The x-ray takes about 15 minutes to complete.

Computed Axial Tomography (CT or CAT Scan)

A CAT scan is an x-ray that combines many x-ray images. It uses a computer to create cross-sectional or three dimensional pictures of inside your body. A CAT scan is used to see normal and abnormal things in the body. To prepare for a CAT, you will be asked:

- not to take anything by mouth for 3 hours before your appointment
- to arrive 30 minutes before your scan
- to bring a list of all the medications you are taking

A CAT scan takes about 15 minutes to complete.

Biopsy

A biopsy is a procedure that takes samples of fluid, cells or tissue so they can be looked at closely under a microscope. The results of a biopsy help a specialist make a diagnosis and plan the care you receive.

The time to complete a biopsy depends on the biopsy type. Talk to your Nurse Navigator about what type you are having and how long it will take.

Bone Scan

A bone scan is a test that looks at problems with your bones. It is done in two stages.

Stage 1:

- a small amount of radioactive tracer is injected into a vein
- the tracer is 'tagged' to calcium-like material and is taken in by your bones (this process can take up to 3 hours)
- you leave and return about three hours later for the scan

Stage 2:

- you are placed on a bed and a camera scans your body
- the camera creates images of the spread of radioactivity in your bones

After you have received your test results, your Nurse Navigator will discuss them with you.

The radio active material will break down over time. It is passed out of your body through urine and your bowel. This can take 2-3 days. Bring a list of your medications to make sure they do not interact with the injection.

Your appointment time is the time you will be given the injection. Make sure you arrive 15-20 minutes before. The scan takes about 1-3 hours to complete.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

MRI uses radio waves, electromagnets and a computer to create images of the inside of your body. Radio waves cause small electrical signals. These signals are picked up by the computer. The computer then creates images of your body. The health care team use these images to look for problems.

People with metal in their body should not have an MRI because the metal affects the electromagnets. An MRI may also affect pacemakers. People with pacemakers should let the Nurse Navigator know.

During a MRI, a patient is placed into the "tube" of the scanner. Being still for the scan is important so good images can be taken. There is no pain with the test. Patients afraid of small spaces (claustrophobia) may need something (sedative) to help them relax or sleep for the test. If a sedative is given, you will need to bring someone with you to drive you home.

While the machine is running, it makes knocking sounds. This is normal and will stop when the test has finished.

A MRI can last 40 minutes.

What To Expect At Your Specialist Appointment

You may be asked to see a specialist. A specialist is someone who focuses on a specific area of care. To help you prepare for these appointments, please follow these tips:

- bring your health card
- bring a list of your medications
- bring a list of herbal, vitamins or supplements you are taking
- bring a list of allergies
- bring a friend or family member for support
- bring glasses if you wear them. There may be forms to fill out. It is also helpful to bring a translator if you need one
- bring a list of questions for the specialist
- be prepared for a possible delay in appointment times. Specialist offices are busy with a lot of patients for different issues. This can lead to delays and may cause anxiety or frustration
- bring a book or magazine to help pass the time

Waiting For Tests, Results & Appointments

Waiting for tests and test results can be hard. It is normal to feel worried or upset. Keep in mind that your doctor and Nurse Navigator are there to help you. Be sure to speak with them about questions or concerns you have.

Here are some things you can do to make it a little easier:

- at the time of your test, ask when and how you will be told about the results. This will prepare you for how long you will have to wait
- put together a list of your medications and bring it to your appointment
- write out your health history and bring it to your appointment
- write down questions you have for the specialist
- keep doing your everyday routines
- take care of yourself
- rest and sleep when you can
- try relaxation techniques
- eat well
- stay physically active
- avoid caffeine and alcohol
- talk about how you are feeling
- speak to your Nurse Navigator if you want to talk to someone about what you are going through
- talk to a spiritual leader (if applicable)
- bring someone to your appointments
- ask your Nurse Navigator for help

NOTES

NOTES

Appointment Tracker

My Specialist's Name: _____
Phone Number: _____
Office Location: _____
Appointment Date: _____ Time: _____

My Oncologist's Name: _____
Phone Number: _____
Office Location: _____
Appointment Date: _____ Time: _____

Test: _____
Appointment Date: _____ Time: _____
Location: _____
Special Instructions: _____
_____
_____

Test: _____
Appointment Date: _____ Time: _____
Location: _____
Special Instructions: _____
_____
_____

Test: _____
Appointment Date: _____ Time: _____
Location: _____
Special Instructions: _____
_____
_____
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Patient Education *The right information at the right time.*

The goal of the Patient Education program is to improve the patient's experience throughout their cancer journey. Our program is working to create new and better ways for patients to get the information they need and at the time they need it.

The right information at the right time is a key philosophy in our program. To deliver this requires patient and family involvement in how our educational materials are developed and delivered. Patient and family input is essential to how information is communicated and we try to build it into everything we do. We are proud to say that our new educational materials are patient reviewed and patient approved. Look for the patient stamp of approval on our materials and watch for more exciting changes to come.

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Partners: for you, with you, every step of the journey

2220 Kildare Road, Windsor, ON N8W 2X3
519-254-5577 ext# 58502

www.wrh.on.ca/escrcp

January 2013