



The beMi[®] Jargon Journal

COMMONLY USED TERMS

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Adjunctive therapy

Adverse reaction
or adverse event

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Anaemia

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Anti-cancer treatments

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**Active ingredient**

This is the substance in medicines that have an effect on the body. They're the ingredients that make the medicine work. Medicines may have more than one active ingredient. The active ingredient is different from the brand name, which is the name a company gives to the medicine.

Acute pain

Pain that happens suddenly, and is caused by injury, illness, trauma, a medical procedure, or something similar. It generally lasts from a few minutes to less than six months, and goes away when the cause of the pain is removed, treated or healed. The pain you feel when you burn your hand on a hot stove is an example of acute pain.

Adjunctive therapy

Treatment which is given in addition to a main treatment to make it work better.

Adverse reaction or adverse event

When a medicine, vaccine, or medical device causes an effect that it wasn't meant to. Adverse reactions and events can include side effects of medicines and vaccines, or problems involving medical devices.

Allied health

This term describes healthcare professionals who are not doctors, nurses, midwives or dentists. There are many different types of allied health professionals – for example; physiotherapists, psychologists, pharmacists, and social workers.

Allogeneic stem cell transplant

A procedure where a patient receives healthy blood-forming cells (stem cells) from a donor to replace their own stem cells, after they have been destroyed by radiation treatment or high doses of chemotherapy.



**Anaemia**

When a person doesn't have enough healthy red blood cells or haemoglobin (a protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen) to carry oxygen to the body's tissues. It can cause symptoms like tiredness, weakness and shortness of breath. There are many different causes of anaemia, and the treatment depends on what it's caused by.

Antibodies

Immune proteins, also known as immunoglobulins (see Immunoglobulin) that help your body fight disease. White blood cells make antibodies which can recognise diseases in the body. Once they recognise a disease, the antibodies tell other parts of the immune system to attack it.

Anti-cancer treatments

There are many ways to treat cancer. Treatments for cancer may be used by themselves, or together. The type of anti-cancer treatment you receive will depend on the type of cancer you have and how advanced it is. Surgery, radiation therapy and chemotherapy are some common types of anti-cancer treatment, but there are many others.

Autologous stem cell transplant

A type of bone marrow transplant, where healthy blood stem cells are removed from a person's own body and stored before a treatment like chemotherapy or radiation therapy which can damage blood stem cells. After treatment, these stem cells are put back into the body to replace the ones damaged by treatment. Autologous stem cell transplants are most often used as part of treatment for different types of blood cancer.

Bilirubin

A yellow-coloured substance made when haemoglobin, the main component of red blood cells, is broken down. Having levels of bilirubin in your body that are higher than normal can cause your skin and eyes to look yellow, a condition called jaundice. Higher than normal levels of bilirubin can be caused by problems with the liver or the gallbladder, or because red blood cells are breaking down inside the body at a higher rate than normal.

Bioavailability

A measure of how much of a medicine's active ingredient reaches the place in the body where it is meant to work. There are a lot of different things that can affect the bioavailability of a medicine, like whether it is taken as a tablet or goes directly into the bloodstream, or whether or not the medicine interacts with other medicines you might be taking at the same time.

**Biologic therapy**

Any type of medical therapy that comes from a living organism. Many different types of treatment are biologic therapies, like vaccines, blood products and medicines made from antibodies.

Biopsy

A procedure where a small piece of tissue or cells from the body are removed for testing in a laboratory.

Blood test (or Pathology)

When a sample of your blood is taken to check your general health, or to help your doctor diagnose or monitor a condition you may have.

Bone marrow

The sponge-like tissue inside the hollow part of your bones. Bone marrow is where your red and white blood cells are formed and develop into mature cells.

Brand-name medicine

An original medicine that has been developed by a pharmaceutical company (see Generic medicine).

B-symptoms

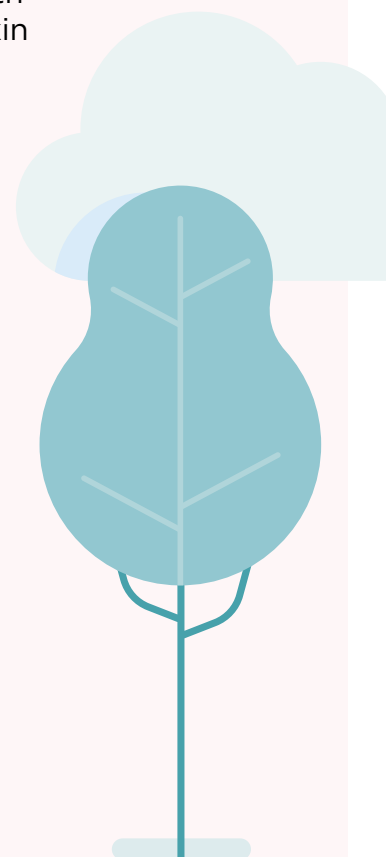
Symptoms that may be associated with both Hodgkin's lymphoma and some non-Hodgkin lymphomas. They include fevers, night sweats and weight loss.

Bulk billing

When a doctor bills the government directly for a medical service. It means you don't pay anything for what you had done or the visit.

Carrier

Someone who has a gene that can cause a genetic condition, but doesn't have the symptoms or effects of the condition. Carriers often have family members with a genetic condition and may pass the condition on to any children they may have.



**Chemotherapy**

Using anti-cancer drugs to kill cancer cells by stopping them from growing or reproducing.

Chronic Disease Management (CDM) Plan

If you have a chronic condition, you might make a chronic disease management plan with your doctor, to help ensure you get the care you need. The plan involves your doctor and other health professionals involved in managing your condition, keeping up to date with managing your health. Your plan can help you work out which health professionals you need to see and when and tell you ways to deal with the health system.

Chronic conditions

Health problems that last a long time, sometimes throughout your whole life, and have long-lasting effects on your health. If you have a chronic condition, you usually have to see health professionals regularly to help manage the condition and its effects on your ongoing health.

Chronic pain

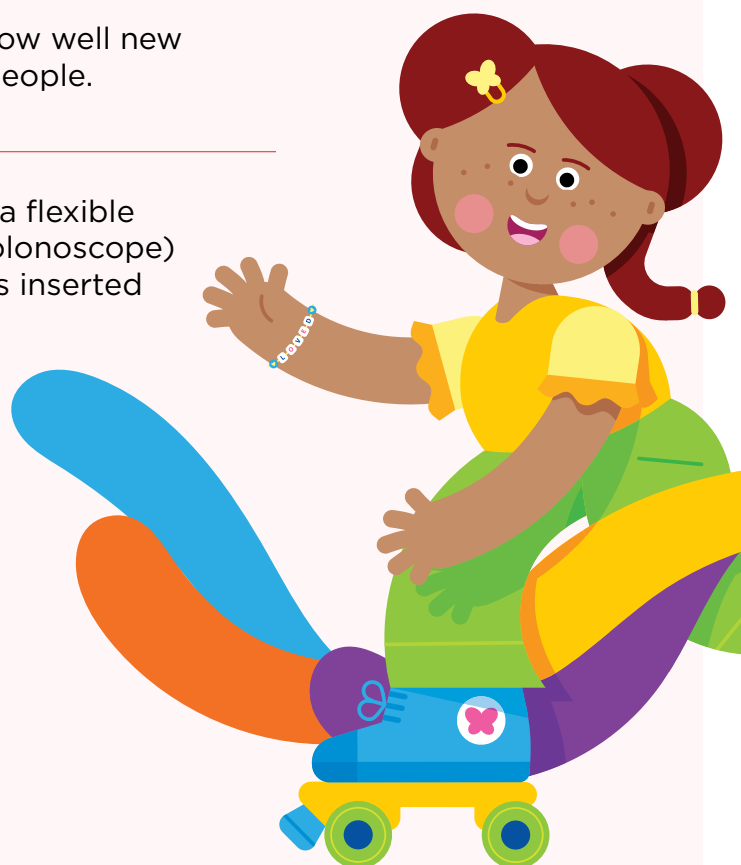
Pain that lasts longer than 3 months, or continues beyond the expected healing time. Chronic pain can be mild to severe but this can vary. People with chronic pain usually have it most days.

Clinical trial

A study that tests how well new medicines work in people.

Colonoscopy

A procedure where a flexible tube (known as a colonoscope) with a tiny camera is inserted through the anus into the large bowel (colon), allowing the doctor to look for signs of a medical condition.



**Congenital**

A condition or trait that you are born with. A congenital condition might be genetic and come from your parents or be due to something that happened during pregnancy or birth, or a combination of both.

Consumer Medical Information (CMI)

When you get a new medicine you may receive, or be directed online, to a document called the Consumer Medical Information (CMI). The CMI gives you important information about how to use your medicine safely. It will tell you who should and shouldn't take the medicine, how to take the medicine properly, any side effects it may cause and any other medicines it can interact with.

CT Scan

A computerised tomography (CT) scan lets a doctor see a more detailed view of the inside of your body than a normal x-ray. A CT scanner takes multiple x-ray pictures of your body from different angles. A computer then puts the pictures together to create a detailed view of your bones and internal organs. These scans can help doctors diagnose conditions and plan treatments.

Diagnostic odyssey

A term used to describe the long journey many people with a rare disease and their families undertake to receive an accurate diagnosis. On average, this takes 5.6 years.

Dose/dosage

Even though the words are similar, dose and dosage have different meanings.


- Dose is the amount of medication you take each time you take it.
 - Dosage means the dose, how often you take the dose, and how many doses you take altogether, over a particular period of time.
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Dyspnoea

Dyspnoea is the medical term for shortness of breath. It's described as a tightness in the chest, difficulty breathing or a feeling of suffocation.

Endoscopy

A procedure where a flexible tube (known as an endoscope) with a tiny camera is used to examine the inside of the body.



**Epidemiology**

A type of science that studies patterns of disease. Epidemiologists can help us understand how many people in the population have a condition, if that number is changing, whether certain groups of people are more affected, and how a disease may affect the way we live.

First-line treatment

The first treatment your doctor uses to treat a specific condition. First-line treatments are usually the ones that are expected to work the best with the fewest side effects for most people. First-line treatment is also called 'induction therapy', 'primary therapy' or 'primary treatment'.

Generic medicines

A copy of a brand-name medicine. It may be sold under a different name and look different, but it contains the same type and quantity of active ingredient as the original medicine (see *Brand-name medicine*).

Genetics

The study of genes. Your genes carry information that is passed from generation to generation which can have an impact on your health, appearance and even your personality (see *Congenital*).

Genetic counselling

Your doctor may refer you to a genetic counsellor, who can help you understand how genetic conditions (see *Genetics*) might affect you or your family. Your counsellor will ask you questions about your family's health history and may suggest genetic testing to learn more about any genetic conditions (see *Genetic testing*).

Genetic testing

Genetic testing looks for changes in the DNA that makes up your genes. This helps your doctor understand whether there is anything in your genes that mean you or people in your family may be affected by or pass on a genetic condition. Genetic testing can also be done some types of cancer cells to help your doctor work out which cancer treatment may work best for you.

Genotype

Your complete, unique DNA sequence. It's what makes you who you are. You inherit half of your genotype from each of your parents.

Genome

The entire set of DNA instructions found in each cell of your body. In most people the genome is made up of 23 pairs of chromosomes, which are found in the nucleus, a tiny structure in the centre of each cell.



Genomic profiling

The process of mapping all the genes in your body. Your doctor can use this map of your genes to see how they work together, and how they might respond to other things, like medications in your body or things in the environment. This can help them work why some people develop health conditions and some people don't. Doctors can also look at the genetic profile of cancerous tumours, to find out what treatments they may respond to. This can also help researchers work out how some cancers form, which could lead to new ways to diagnose, treat and prevent cancer.

Genomic testing

A test that looks at hundreds or thousands of genes in your body to help identify DNA changes that could affect your health. They can help your doctor diagnose a range of genetic diseases. Genomic tests can look at a lot of genes at a time, because they look for DNA changes that researchers already know may be related to a health condition (see Genetic testing).

GP Management Plan (GPMP)

A plan your GP makes to help you manage your health better if you have a chronic condition. The plan explains your healthcare needs, says what your GP is going to do to help manage your condition, and lists things that you can do to help manage your condition. Your GP will review your plan regularly to make sure it is working for you.



**HCP
(Health Care
Professional)**

Someone whose job it is to help you stay healthy or helps you get better when you are sick. They may be doctors, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, allied health professionals (see Allied health), or practice complementary medicine. They may work in hospitals, clinics, or other places where you go for medical care.

**Health
technology**

Anything from medicines, vaccines to medical devices and tests, to new systems, like electronic health records and electronic prescriptions. The aim of health technologies is to help you stay healthy, to get the best out of any treatment you may receive, and to make healthcare more accessible and efficient.

**Hodgkin's
lymphoma**

A blood cancer that begins in white blood cells called lymphocytes and affects the lymphatic system, which is part of the body's immune system. Along with non-Hodgkin lymphoma, it is one of the two main types of lymphoma.

Immunoglobulin

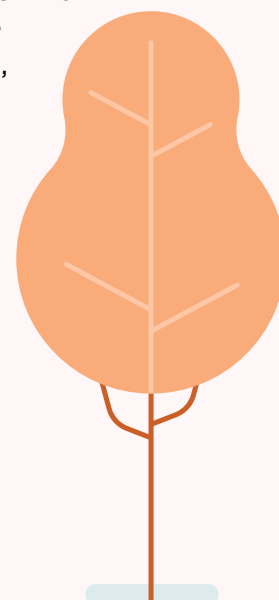
Immune proteins, also known as antibodies (see Antibodies) that help your body fight disease.

Immunosuppressants

Medicines that stop your immune system from attacking healthy cells and tissues. They can be used to treat some autoimmune conditions or to help stop your immune system from rejecting organs or stem cell transplants.

**Inflammatory
bowel disease
(IBD)**

A chronic condition that makes your intestine swollen and inflamed. There are two types of IBD - Crohn's disease, which causes inflammation anywhere in your digestive system, and ulcerative colitis, which affects only the lining of your large intestine. Some people get confused between IBD and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) because they share some symptoms, but they are not the same thing, and need different treatments.

**Injection site**

The specific spot on your body where a needle is put in to give a medication or vaccine.

**Intravenous**

Intravenous (or IV) is a word that means ‘into a vein’. It describes when fluid is delivered directly into the bloodstream through a vein. This can be done using a needle, a central line or a port.

Intravenous infusion

Intravenous (or IV) infusion is a way you can receive fluids, medicine, nutrition, or blood directly into your bloodstream through a vein, through a needle, a central line, or a port. Infusion means the fluid goes into your bloodstream through the vein at a controlled rate, over time.

IV fluids

Special liquids that are given directly into your bloodstream, through a vein, to help prevent or fix dehydration. You may be prescribed IV fluids to make sure your body is properly hydrated and has the right balance of fluid.

IVIg

IVIg means intravenous immunoglobulin (see Immunoglobulin). It’s a treatment made from antibodies (see Antibodies) taken from the blood of many healthy donors. It’s used to boost your immune system and help treat some conditions like autoimmune disorders or infections. It can also help prevent infections if you’ve had an organ or stem cell treatment.

Lipase

An enzyme your body uses to break down fat in food, so it can be absorbed in the intestines. Lipase is made in your pancreas, mouth, and stomach.

Liver transaminases

Enzymes that help your liver cells break down substances and remove toxins from your body. If your blood test (see Blood test) shows higher than normal levels of liver transaminases, it may be a sign that there is a problem with your liver.

Lymph nodes

Lymph nodes are small lumps of tissue located throughout your body that contain white blood cells, which fight infection. They are part of your body’s immune system.

**Monoclonal antibody**

A type of protein created in the laboratory that act like the antibodies (see Antibodies) your own body produces, and help to stimulate your immune system. They target specific cells in your body, like cancer cells or immune cells that aren't working properly, and destroy them. Different medications made from monoclonal antibodies are used to treat many conditions including autoimmune disorders and cancers.

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)

A way for your doctor to see detailed images of the organs, bones, and tissues inside your body. Before you have an MRI, your doctor may inject a substance into your vein which can help them to see your tissues and organs more clearly. Most MRIs are a large tube-shaped machine that you lie in.

Multidisciplinary team (MDT)

A group of healthcare professionals from different specialities who work together to plan your treatment or care, taking into account your individual needs and preferences. Your MDT may include your GP, nurses, allied health professionals (see Allied health), health educators and specialists.

National Blood Authority (NBA)

The organisation that manages Australia's supply of blood. They make sure people who need it have access to donated blood and medicines made from blood products, and that these products are safe.



**Neurodegeneration**

The gradual deterioration of the cells in your brain, spinal cord or nerves. Neurodegeneration can be caused by a number of conditions, which usually develop slowly, with effects and symptoms often appearing later in life. While there may not be cures, there are treatments that can help manage symptoms and slow the progress of many neurodegenerative conditions.

Neurodiversity

A word that describes how everyone's brain develops and works in a unique way. This means there's no single 'correct' way for the brain to work, and it's natural for us all to learn and interact with the world differently.

Non-Hodgkin lymphoma

A blood cancer that begins in white blood cells called lymphocytes and affects the lymphatic system, which is part of the body's immune system. Along with Hodgkin's lymphoma, it is one of the two main types of lymphoma.

Non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC)

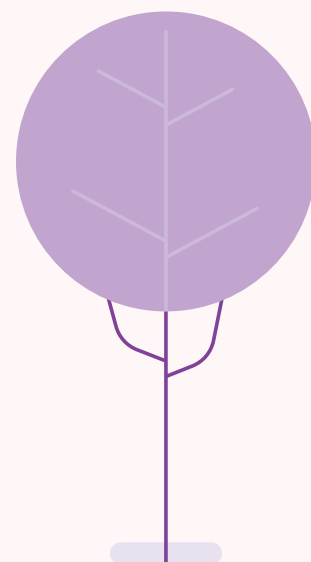
The most common type of lung cancer. It occurs when abnormal cells form and multiply in your lung tissues. Compared to small cell lung cancer, NSCLC typically grows slower, and the cells look larger underneath a microscope.

Parenteral support (PS)

Delivering nutrients directly into your bloodstream intravenously (see Intravenous). This method is used when your gut is unable to break down food and absorb nutrients the usual way. PS provides you with all the nutrients you need in a form that your body can use. It often contains water, protein, sugar, fats, vitamins and minerals.

Peer support

Giving and receiving help and support based on shared knowledge and experiences. Peer support can be provided in many ways: one-on-one or in groups, in-person, over the phone, or online, and provided by paid employees or volunteers. Peer support can be an important addition to the care you receive from healthcare professionals. Talking with others who are similar to you can have positive effects on both your mental health and overall health.



**Person-centred care**

Being treated respectfully as an individual human being, and not just as a condition to be treated. It involves you and the people providing your care both understanding what is important to you, your family, carers, and support people, and working together to make treatment decisions and plan your ongoing care.

PET scan

A way for your doctor to see a picture of how your body functions. It can detect cancers and parts of the body that aren't working normally, which can help your doctor make a diagnosis. During a PET scan, you'll be given an injection of a small amount of shortacting radioactive liquid called a tracer. The tracer gives off energy in your body, which can be seen by the scanner.

Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS)

A scheme that lets Australians get prescription medications for most medical conditions without paying full price. If you are prescribed a medicine that's covered by the PBS, you'll pay a small amount (a co-payment), which is the same for all medicines, and the government will pay the rest of the cost directly to the pharmacy. If you hold a concession card, your co-payment will be lower. Most medicines cost a lot more than the co-payment.

Phenotype

A word to describe your personal characteristics, like height, weight, eye colour or blood type. Your phenotype is the result of a combination of things you have been exposed to and things you do in your life, and your genotype (see Genotype).

Physician

In Australia, physicians are doctors who have done extra training to become an expert in a specific area of medicine. They may also be called 'specialists', 'specialist physicians' or 'consultant physicians' (see Specialist). Physicians in Australia are registered members of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP).

Platelets

Small cell fragments which are made in the bone marrow and found in the blood. Platelets help your body to form blood clots, which can stop bleeding and help wounds heal.

**Precision medicine**

Using individual characteristics, like your genetic profile, environment and lifestyle, to work out how to manage your condition in the best way possible. Precision medicine is the opposite of a 'one-size-fits-all' approach, where every patient with a particular condition receives the same treatment.

Prescriber

The health provider who has prescribed a particular medicine for you. This may be a GP, a specialist, or a nurse practitioner, and you may have been prescribed the medicine in or out of hospital.

Prevalence

The percentage of people in the population that have a particular health condition at a specific time. For example, if 19.5% of the Australian population was living with diabetes in 2023, you would say the prevalence of diabetes in 2023 was 19.5%.

Primary healthcare

This term is used to describe the person you contact first when you have a health problem that isn't an emergency. Your primary healthcare provider is usually your GP, but depending on what your particular health problem is, might describe someone like a dentist, a physiotherapist or a nurse on call telephone service.





In the Australian health care system, Medicare pays a certain amount of money towards each medical service, like a GP visit. There are a number of terms to describe how medical services are paid for:

- Private billing is a doctor who charges a fee, and you pay it at the time of your medical service. You can claim a rebate from Medicare for the amount they cover.
- Bulk billing is when the doctor bills the government directly for the Medicare rebate and accepts the rebate as full payment for the medical service. This means you don't have to pay anything for the medical service.
- The gap payment is the difference between the fee charged by your doctor and the Medicare rebate. For example, if your doctor visit costs \$100 and the Medicare rebate is \$75, the \$25 you need to pay is called the gap.
- Out-of-pocket expenses are costs you have to pay for medical services that are not paid for by Medicare or private health insurance. A gap payment is an example of an out-of-pocket expense.
- Part billing is when a doctor charges you a fee that is partly covered by Medicare and partly covered by you, out-of-pocket.

Private vs bulk bill vs gap vs out-of-pocket vs part billing

Product Information (PI)

A document containing detailed information about a medication, written for healthcare professionals like doctors and pharmacists, to help them prescribe and use that medication safely and effectively.

Protein

Proteins are complex molecules found in your body. They play many critical roles within your body and are essential for the structure and function of your body's organs and tissues.

Quality of life (QoL)

Your overall enjoyment of life and how well you feel. This is made up of a lot of parts, including your emotions, your social life, how well you're going physically, how well you are able to cope with ordinary tasks of living, like eating and getting dressed, and how well you feel your needs and wants are being met. Sometimes, when researchers are looking at how well a treatment works, they will also look at how it changes people's quality of life.

**Radiation therapy**

A type of cancer treatment that uses radiation, focused on the part of your body where your cancer is, to kill or damage cancer cells. Radiation therapy is used to treat many different cancers, and is sometimes used alongside other cancer treatments, like chemotherapy or surgery.

Rebate

Money you get back from Medicare or from your private health insurer after you have paid for a medical service like a doctor's appointment, a medical test, a procedure like surgery, and some medicines.

Relapse

When a disease, or the signs and symptoms of a disease reappear after they have improved, or after you have been in remission.

Remission


When the signs and symptoms of a disease disappear. Remission can be partial, meaning the disease is still present, or complete, meaning all signs of the disease have gone. Remission can be temporary or permanent.

Short bowel syndrome - intestinal failure (SBS-IF)

A condition where a part of the small or large intestine is missing or has been removed, meaning your body has trouble absorbing the energy, nutrients and fluids it needs through food and drink. There are many different reasons this condition can occur, including surgery to treat conditions like Crohn's disease or an infection, being born with an intestinal malformation, or having an injury.

Side effects

Any effect caused by taking a medicine that is unexpected or unwanted. All medicines can cause side effects, including medicines you get on prescription from your doctor, and medicines, vitamins and supplements you may buy from a pharmacy, supermarket or health food store. Talk to your doctor if you think you're having a side effect from a medicine you are taking.

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**Specialist**

A doctor who has done extra training to become an expert in a specific area of medicine. Your GP might send you to see a specialist if they think that special skills and expertise are necessary to diagnose or treat your condition. You usually need a referral from your GP to see a specialist, and your GP can help you find the right specialist for you.

Stem cell

A type of cell that can reproduce and develop into different types of specialised cells in the body. Currently, stem cells are used in procedures like bone marrow transplants, where healthy bone marrow stem cells are transplanted into the bone marrow to help people make healthy blood cells because their own bone marrow stem cells have been destroyed by cancer treatment, or don't work the way they should (see Stem cell transplant). Scientists are excited to discover new ways stem cells may be able to help treat other conditions in the future.

Stem cell transplant

A medical treatment where damaged blood cells in your body are replaced with healthy ones. The replacement cells may come from a donor or from your own body. Stem cell transplants can also be called bone marrow transplants.

Subcutaneous injection

Subcutaneous is a word that means 'under the skin'. A subcutaneous injection is a way of giving medication where a needle is used to inject a medicine under your skin, but above your muscle tissue.

T cell

A type of white blood cell that is part of your immune system. T cells help your body fight the causes of disease, like bacteria and viruses, and harmful cells, like cancer cells.



**Telehealth**

When you speak to your doctor or another healthcare provider without going into their office. You might have a telehealth appointment on the phone or by video chat. Having a telehealth appointment is just like a normal appointment, but you are in one place, and your healthcare provider is in another.

Treatment cycle

A period of treatment followed by a rest period where no treatment is given, that is repeated on a regular schedule. For example, treatment given for one week followed by a three week rest period is one treatment cycle.

X-ray

Medical x-rays are used to generate images of tissues and structures inside the body.