Cancer Care Alberta

Guidance & Resource Unit

High-Risk GIST: Physician Transfer of Care Letter

Sarcoma Tumour Team

Version 1.2026
October 13, 2026

[DATE]

Re: Transfer of Care

Dear Dr. [Insert Physician Name],

Your patient [Insert Patient Name] has received treatment(s) for a gastrointestinal stromal tumour at the Cancer Centre and is now being **transitioned** back to for late cancer surveillance (years 5-10) in addition to their regular care.

Your patient is in [Insert Year] year of their follow up surveillance.

The evidence-based recommendations below outline the standard follow-up procedures for cancer surveillance, and are intended to assist you in providing optimal cancer follow-up care for your patient; these recommendations are not intended to be a substitute for clinical judgment.

Surveillance for Sarcoma Cancer Recurrence

- Annually for years 5-10: Imaging (abdominal/pelvic CT or MRI).

The full schedule of gastrointestinal stromal tumour surveillance can be found in the Follow-Up and Surveillance of Sarcoma guideline.

Please be aware of these potential symptoms of cancer recurrence:

- Development of a new, unexplained mass in or adjacent to the prior surgical site
- New onset of pain or swelling in the region of previous surgery without a clear cause
- Unintentional weight loss and/or reduced appetite, including early satiety
- Abdominal discomfort or pain
- Bloating or a sensation of abdominal fullness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Occult or overt gastrointestinal bleeding

Please follow-up with the referring oncologist or oncology treatment team for specific symptoms and signs of cancer recurrence to watch for in your patient.

Patients presenting with any symptoms or signs of recurrence should be investigated and referred back to the treating oncologist.

Complications and Late Effects of Cancer Treatment

The table below outlines some other common general complications of cancer treatment:

Complication	Actions
Fatigue	• Fatigue should start to improve within months of treatment completion. • Persistent or recurrent fatigue warrants further work-up to rule out other potential causes. • For more information please refer to the Cancer-Related Fatigue Guideline.

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	• Consider referral to Alberta Cancer Exercise Program (www.albertacancerexercise.com)
Lymphedema	• Early symptoms include discomfort at lymph node removal site and may be present with/without overt swelling. • Refer to local rehabilitation therapy services (e.g. physiotherapy) or a rehabilitation oncology clinic (Arthur Child: 587-231-5701; Edmonton: 780-432-8710).
Peripheral Neuropathy	Peripheral neuropathy should improve over months. Patients may present with tingling and numbness, pain or discomfort, or decreased hot/cold sensation.
Psychosocial distress	• Increasing helplessness /hopelessness, distress, anxiety or depression may be present. • Patients experiencing these symptoms should be encouraged to inform their oncology treatment team for appropriate psychosocial referral.
Weight loss	Monitor patients who are at risk and refer to a registered dietician as necessary.
Fertility /Sexual dysfunction	• Some patients may experience sexual or fertility problems following cancer treatment. • The Oncology and Sexuality, Intimacy, and Survivorship (OASIS) program assists patients to manage physical and emotional concerns. To refer patients to the OASIS program, contact the program at 780-391-7664.

Patient Support and General Recommendations

Your patient has received an After Treatment book and the Newly Diagnosed book with resources to help.

Counselling and Support

If you feel your patient would benefit from social, psychological or spiritual counselling, resources are available from the following sources (Community Cancer Centre patients should call the nearest Associate or Tertiary site):

Calgary: 587-231-3570	Lethbridge: 403-388-6814	Other Communities visit
Edmonton: 780-643-4303	Medicine Hat: 403-529-8817	www.ahs.ca/cpn and click: Provincial Cancer Patient Navigation
Grande Prairie: 825-412-4200	Red Deer: 403-343-4485	

Healthy Lifestyle Recommendations

Your patient is encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle. Visit Cancer Care Alberta's supportive care and living well website or the After Treatment book for more information.

Here are some evidence-informed recommendations about modifiable lifestyle factors for your information:

Lifestyle Factor	Recommendations
Body Weight	• Body mass index (BMI): 18.5-25 kg/m^2 • Waist circumference: less than 80 cm for women / less than 94 cm for men.
Physical Activity	• Try to be active for 2.5 hours (150 minutes) every week. • Spread out exercise throughout the day and week, such as 30 minutes 5 days a week. • Focus on moderate (brisk walking) to vigorous activity (jogging).
Nutrition	• Avoid sugary drinks and foods. • Eat a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and legumes.

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	• Limit consumption of red meats (such as beef, pork, and lamb), and avoid processed meats. • Limit consumption of salty foods and foods processed with salt.
Dietary Supplements/ Bone Health	• Vitamin D: 1000 - 2000 IU per day. • Calcium: 1000 mg per day (from all sources). • Treatment and follow up as per Canadian Osteoporosis Guidelines.
Alcohol	Limit alcohol consumption (<1 drink/day, <3 drinks/week).
Smoking	Practice smoking cessation. For help contact Alberta Quits 1-877-710-QUIT (7848) or visit www.albertaquits.ca and www.ahs.ca/guru for the clinical practice guideline.
Sun Exposure	• Advise on avoidance of excessive or potentially harmful UV exposure. • Advocate for the use of sunscreen and sunglasses. • Advise against the use of indoor tanning beds. • Check skin regularly for suspicious lesion.
Immunizations	• Annual non-live influenza vaccination unless contraindicated. • Other vaccinations as appropriate.
Other cancer screening	• Age-appropriate screening such as breast, colorectal and other cancers. • Refer to www.screeningforlife.ca/healthcare-providers-resources/ for more information.

Physician Support

The following resources provide support and information for physicians:

- Primary Health Care Resource Centre: https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/page11929.aspx
- Specialist Link (Calgary/Southern Alberta): https://www.specialistlink.ca/
- ConnectMD (Edmonton/Northern Alberta): https://www.pcnconnectmd.com/
- Treatment and follow up guidelines: https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/cancerguidelines.aspx

At any time if you have any concerns or are in need of more information please call:

CCI	Sarcoma Triage Nurse Coordinator	587-735-8915, EXT 9 *(not constantly monitored)*
	New Patient Appointment Office	825-394-2292
ACCC	Sarcoma Nurse Coordinator	587-231-4349

We appreciate your partnership in caring for this patient.

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