



## Section Four: Making treatment decisions

*Tekiona Whā*  
Te whakamahi whakataunga  
maimoatanga

### Key points:

- The treatment choices you are offered will be based on all the information available about the tumour in your brain and your general health.
- The recommended treatment will depend on:
  - the type and grade of the brain tumour
  - where the tumour is in the brain
  - your general health
  - your personal wishes.
- You will be cared for by a team of health professionals that may include:
  - your GP or whānau doctor
  - oncology nurses and cancer care coordinators
  - a neurologist
  - a neurosurgeon
  - a medical oncologist
  - a radiation oncologist

- Before you visit your treatment team, think about any questions you would like to have answered.
- You can ask another doctor for a second opinion about the tumour in your brain or the treatment.

## Ngā kōrero matua:

- Ka hāngai ngā kōwhiringa ka hoatu ki a koe, i runga anō i ngā mōhiohio katoa e wātea ana mō tōu ake puku roro, me tō hauora whānui
- Ka whakawhirinaki te maimoatanga kua taunakitia ki ēnei:
  - te momo puku roro, me te māhiti o te puku roro
  - te wāhi e noho ana te puku i roto i te roro
  - tō oranga whānui
  - ōu ake hiahia.
- Ka tiakina koe e tētahi rōpū ngaio ā-hauora, tērā pea kai roto ko ēnei tāngata:
  - tō GP, tō rata ā-whānau rānei
  - ngā tapuhi mātai matepukupuku me ngā kairuruku atawhai matepukupuku
  - tētahi mātai matepukupuku
  - tētahi mātanga io (tōpū)
  - tētahi mātanga mātai matepukupuku ā-hauora
  - tētahi mātanga mātai matepukupuku ā-iraruke
- I mua i tō haere ki te tiroiro i tō rōpū maimoatanga, ata whakaarohia ētai pātai tērā pea ka hiahia koe kia whakautua.
- E āhei ana koe ki te tono i tētahi atu rata mō tētahi whakaaro tuarua e pā ana ki tō puku roro, te maimoatanga rānei.

## How treatment decisions are made

The treatment choices you are offered will be based on all the information available about the tumour in your brain and your general health.

Recommendations will depend on:

- the type and grade of the brain tumour
- where the tumour is in the brain
- your general health
- your personal wishes and goals of care.

## The treatment team

From the time you are diagnosed with a brain tumour, you will be cared for by a team of health professionals, who may include:

- your GP or whānau doctor, who will often be the first person you see
- oncology nurses and cancer care coordinators, who specialise in the care of people receiving cancer treatment
- a neurologist, who specialises in diseases of the brain and nervous system
- a neurosurgeon, who specialises in surgery to the brain
- a medical oncologist, who specialises in the use of different medications to treat cancer
- a radiation oncologist, who specialises in the use of radiation treatment.

Your treatment team may include other health care professionals, such as a social worker, psychologist, dietitian, physiotherapist, practice nurse, community health nurse, pharmacist, occupational therapist, and palliative care specialist.

## Talking to your treatment team

When you first learn you have a brain tumour, you may have many questions. Before you visit your treatment team, we suggest you think about the questions you would like them to answer and how much detail you are comfortable with. There is a lot of information to take in, so it can be helpful to have a support person with you when you visit. See page 51 for some questions you may wish to ask your treatment team.

It is useful to ask your treatment team who to contact, and how, if you have any questions outside of your appointment times.

## Asking for a second opinion

You may want to ask another doctor about the tumour in your brain or treatment to help you feel more confident about your treatment decision. You can ask your treatment team or GP or whānau doctor to refer you to another doctor to get a second opinion.

## Your rights – Health and Disability Commission

Your rights as a health and disability service consumer are protected by the Health and Disability Commission's Code of Rights. If you have concerns about a health and disability service, independent advocates are available to support and guide you, or you can complain directly to the Health and Disability Commissioner.



You can find more information here:

[www.hdc.org.nz/your-rights/the-code-and-your-rights](http://www.hdc.org.nz/your-rights/the-code-and-your-rights)

## Interpreting services

New Zealand's Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights states that everyone has the right to have an interpreter present during a medical appointment. If you do not speak English as your first language, or are deaf, you may find it helpful to use an interpreter when you have your hospital appointments. You can speak to a member of your health care team about interpreters in your local area.

## Talking to others

Once you have talked about your treatment options with your treatment team, you may want to discuss this with other people. Talking it over can help you decide what is right for you. You may want to talk to your whānau or friends, specialist nurses, your GP or whānau doctor, the Cancer Society, a hospital social worker, or a spiritual advisor.

## Coping with waiting

Waiting is a big part of receiving your diagnosis and starting treatment. It can take several days, or even weeks, for your treatment team to review your test results before they can discuss treatment options with you.

If you are finding the waiting difficult, contact your treatment team.



You can find more information on coping with waiting on our website:

[cancer.org.nz/coping-with-waiting](http://cancer.org.nz/coping-with-waiting)

## Taking part in a clinical trial

There are many new and emerging treatments for cancer. Clinical trials are a vital part of the search to find better treatments for cancer.

Clinical trials test new and modified treatments to see if they are better than existing treatments. In a randomised clinical trial, you will receive either the standard treatment currently available or the new treatment being tested. Neither you nor your doctor can decide which treatment you get.

People all over the world have taken part in clinical trials that have improved cancer treatments, but not all treatments tested in trials turn out to be helpful.

If you are asked to take part in a clinical trial, make sure you fully understand the reasons for the trial and what it means for you. It is your decision whether you take part in a trial or not.