

Newsletter

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www.stgeorgescancerinstitute.co.nz



ST GEORGE'S
CANCER INSTITUTE
(Registered Charitable Trust)

Greetings

Well, we are heading towards the end of summer and I'm not looking forward to winter. I was hoping 2021 would be better, however it has started off worse with the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 and the changing alert levels. Let's hope things improve.

We have commenced the ground improvement work for the construction of the third bunker. The design has been future proofed to accommodate world leading linear accelerator technology, only made possible through the generous donations we receive.

Thank you to some of our cancer patients who have shared their stories: (www.stgeorgescancercentre.org.nz).

Cilla Glasson
Chair, Cancer Institute Trustees Ltd



Dr Michelle Vaughan
Consultant Medical Oncologist at
St George's Cancer Care since
2017

Specialist areas:

- Lower gastrointestinal cancers
- Gynaecological cancers

Michelle graduated in medicine and completed her specialist training from Auckland University in 1988. She went on to undertake advanced training at The Royal Marsden Hospital in London.

Returning to New Zealand in 1998, Michelle worked at Auckland Hospital from 2001 to 2007, moving to Christchurch in 2007.

Michelle is a member of various medical organisations including the International Gynaecological Cancer Society and New Zealand Gynaecological Cancer Group. She is the Deputy Chair on the Research Advisory Committee for the Australia New Zealand Gynaecological Oncology Group.

"I love my job and aim to achieve the best possible outcome for every patient, through a personalised and collaborative approach."

Dr Ben Hindson

**Consultant Radiation Oncologist
at St George's Cancer Care
since 2014**

Specialist areas:

- Urological cancer
- Prostate cancer
- Bladder cancer
- Gastrointestinal cancers
- Palliative radiation therapy
- Prostate brachytherapy
- Central Nervous System tumours (brain and spinal cord)



Ben graduated in medicine from the University of Otago in 2002 and went on to complete his oncology specialist training in Sydney, Australia. He undertook a fellowship position in urological malignancy and prostate brachytherapy at the Melbourne Prostate Institute.

Ben is a member of various medical organisations including the Trans-Tasman Radiation Oncology Group and the Australian and New Zealand Urogenital and Prostate Cancer Trials Group (ANZUP).

"I really enjoy working with the great team at St George's and being able to provide timely care and high-quality treatment for our patients."

Lung Cancer Research

A unique research collaboration for patients with lung cancer is underway in Christchurch.

Dr Raj Kumar, medical oncologist (*pictured right*), is participating in a global clinical trial using two novel immunotherapy medicines.

Immunotherapy is able to unlock the body's immune system to help fight cancer cells.

Patients have been referred from Christchurch, Timaru, Queenstown and the West Coast.

After assessment at St George's Cancer Care the patients receive their experimental treatment at Christchurch Clinical Studies Trust

Dr Chris Wynne, medical director, says it's exciting to be able to provide lung cancer patients access to immunotherapy drugs that are not yet approved or funded.

Specialists throughout the South Island, including Christchurch Hospital, are referring patients and Christchurch is the leading centre globally for the number of patients in this clinical trial.

Dr Kumar says, "We expect to see the disease responding in this group of patients where treatment options have previously been limited."

What do we do at St George's Cancer Care?

Some of the things that we help people with include:

- Giving information about how to talk about cancer with children and family
- Getting better sleep
- Managing fatigue
- Strategies to help reduce stress and anxiety or low mood and depression
- Ideas to slow down busy, racing thoughts
- Managing pain and discomfort
- Adjusting to changes in your body
- Relationships with partners, family and friends
- Sexual functioning
- Managing work expectations
- Treatment related challenges and planning for the future
- Treatment related phobias eg claustrophobia, fear of needles
- Talking over difficult decisions
- Communicating with your health care team
- Finding meaning and purpose

Overview of our support services

Before, during and after chemotherapy / immunotherapy and radiation treatments it is important for patients to have access to other supportive services.

Dietitian services

Nutrition plays an important role in the management of cancer, and our dietitian is available to discuss specific needs with our patients.

Eating well can positively influence and support cancer treatment. Food and nutrition are important parts of any successful cancer treatment. Nutrients support the growth of healthy cells in your body and help maintain your energy and strength levels.

Nutrition priorities during cancer treatment are:

- To prevent weight loss, even for those overweight



