



# YOUTH CANCER SERVICE

Specialist treatment and support for young people with cancer aged 15-25yrs

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# Young people and cancer

Young patients (15-25 years) have unique and complex needs. A diagnosis of cancer for these young people falls during a critical life stage that includes physical, psychological and social development, major transitions from school to work or further education and growing independence from their families. Young people therefore often show more complex types of psychological distress and social challenges that may require more long-term, time-intensive psychosocial intervention.

The treatment journey for young people with cancer can be exceptionally difficult. The cancers they experience include some with the lowest survival rates and the fact that treatment is delivered across children's and adult hospitals often means that they may not have access to the most appropriate treatment. All this comes at an incredibly challenging time in life, as young people undertake the major transition from childhood to adulthood.

Every year in Australia approximately 1,000 young people aged 15-25 years are diagnosed with cancer.

It is internationally recognised that when a young person is treated in a hospital with specialists who are experts in their cancer type, their chance of survival is significantly improved.



“I was diagnosed with cancer in an adult hospital when I was 17. My doctor referred me to the Youth Cancer Service so that I could have specialised care and support for my age and cancer type”

**Ashleigh aged 18**

## Youth Cancer Service

The Youth Cancer Service (YCS), funded by the Australian Government and administered by CanTeen, aims to reach all young people diagnosed with cancer and provide specialist medical, nursing and psychosocial support from diagnosis, throughout treatment and into survivorship.

Five (5) lead services based in tertiary hospitals in Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne and Perth work collaboratively with over 20 hospitals and health services across the states and territories to provide equitable access for all AYA's to best-practice, age-appropriate care.

# Service Framework

The YCS provides young patients with:

## **Specialist Care**

Access to a qualified team of medical and allied health professionals with experience in treating cancer in young people;

## **Multidisciplinary Teams**

Treatment that is planned and managed by a multidisciplinary team of health professionals;

## **Fertility Preservation**

Access to fertility preservation information and treatment options;

## **Clinical Trials & Research**

Gold standard treatment protocols that have been clinically trialled with young people and access to new clinical trials and research;

## **Psychosocial Care & Support**

Age-appropriate psychosocial support throughout treatment and assistance to transition back to family, community, school and/or work, when treatment ends;

## **Respect**

Treatment and support that recognises and values individual diversity.

## **Youth-friendly Environments**

Treatment and support is delivered in youth-appropriate environments.





# Governance

**National** - The YCS is governed at a national level by a Strategic Advisory Group comprised of lead Australian cancer specialists, researchers, health economists and business leaders. This group is supported and informed by a National Research Advisory Group and a National Dataset Advisory Group. At the heart of YCS governance is a National Youth Advisory Group consisting of 12 young people who have had a diagnosis of cancer. This group consults on all aspects of service development, delivery and evaluation, ensuring that the unique needs of young cancer patients are understood and met.

**State** - At a jurisdictional level a Steering Committee of representatives from health services, state health departments, non-government organisations and the local YCS team govern the provision of state/territory-wide services. The Steering Committee is supported and informed by a Youth Advisory Group representing their local patient group.

Linking the jurisdictional services to the national administration is the National Leadership Group, a team of Lead Clinicians and Service Managers from the five lead YCS sites. This group is facilitated by CanTeen and the YCS National Program and Service Development Managers.

# National Priorities

- Raising awareness of cancers that occur in adolescents and young adults (AYA) and their treatment
- Consistent, best-practice clinical care
- Capacity building and professional development for the YCS workforce
- Credentialing for AYA clinicians
- Increased research on cancer priority areas and improved participation by young cancer patients
- Improved collection, management and analysis of a National AYA dataset
- Sustainable service provision
- Establishing a strong evidence base for clinical work and national programs
- Developing and promoting the use of three clinical guidelines: Psychosocial care, Fertility preservation and Early Detection of AYA cancer by GPs
- Holding an Australasian AYA conference and Youth Summit in December 2015
- Measuring and tracking reach of services and activity to ensure optimal service development

# Contacting the YCS

## **National Office**

☎ 02 9007 0219 or 02 9007 0229

☎ 07 9283 4844

✉ [youthcancer@canteen.org.au](mailto:youthcancer@canteen.org.au)

## **NSW/ACT Youth Cancer Service**

☎ 02 9382 0945 Mob.0400 475 691

☎ 02 9382 1789

✉ [SydneyYouthCancer@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:SydneyYouthCancer@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au)

## **SA/NT Youth Cancer Service**

☎ 08 8222 2804

☎ 08 8222 0740

✉ [youthcancer@health.sa.gov.au](mailto:youthcancer@health.sa.gov.au)

## **VIC/TAS Youth Cancer Service**

☎ 03 9659 1744

☎ 03 9656 1192

✉ [ontrac@petermac.org](mailto:ontrac@petermac.org)

## **QLD Youth Cancer Service**

☎ 07 3636 6205

☎ 07 3636 9432

✉ [QYCS.CHQ@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:QYCS.CHQ@health.qld.gov.au)

## **WA Youth Cancer Service**

☎ 08 6383 3059

☎ 08 6383 3416

✉ [ayaccs@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:ayaccs@health.wa.gov.au)

# The YCS Teams

Combining expertise from across both paediatric and adult sectors, the YCS teams ensure that all treatment options for young people are considered.

Specialist treating teams are located across Australia and include Oncologists, Haematologists, Nurses, Social Workers, Psychologists, Exercise Physiologists, Counsellors, School & Vocation Advisors, Occupational Therapists, Music Therapists and Researchers. The multidisciplinary teams ensure that every aspect of a young person's life is supported, not just their medical care.

Together we will improve outcomes for young people with cancer, boosting survival rates and improving their quality of life.

[www.youthcancer.com.au](http://www.youthcancer.com.au)

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