

A Day at the VGH Spa for Special People



Spa visits can be rather costly, and one is generally charged based on the length or nature of their treatment. Not so with the VGH Special People Spa...no money changes hands, although the cost of admission can be quite high by other measures. For starters, you won't get past the door without some type of blood cancer diagnosis. You see, this 'Spa' is actually called the BMT Clinic. BMT stands for Bone Marrow Transplant, although not all clients are transplant patients. I have come to refer to my treatment days as spa days because I like to focus on the positive side of any situation, and frankly it is like a spa. The staff make it so. They are always asking me if there is anything they can get me or do for me, even when I know they are run off their feet with other patients. For my current cycles of treatment I always have a Friday appointment, and the magic drug that I receive through an IV infusion takes several hours to administer. Initially, this happened every Friday, but for the past year it's every 4 weeks. I realized some time ago that I was looking forward to my treatment days, and I asked myself why I had this rather odd feeling. I realized it is because of what I have described: a modern welcoming facility, amazing staff at all levels, and interesting people to chat with that share a unique life challenge. I have no other agenda on treatment days and can relax completely removed from regular activities. Not to mention that my cancer is being held in remission by the infusions I receive at no charge.

Ten years ago I was living a normal 58 year old middle class life in North Vancouver with a wife, two adult children, and a small construction business. I began to notice some shortness of breath and chest pain during my regular runs on the trails of Lynn Valley, near our home. I convinced myself that this was probably due to a lack of proper training, or perhaps symptoms of a heart issue which I would eventually have to have looked at. However, the pains continued to get worse and I went to see a doctor in August of 2010. Several tests were performed over the next few months, and just before Christmas I was informed that my health problems were caused by Multiple Myeloma, a type of blood cancer. Chemo treatment began at the BMT Clinic on Boxing Day, 4 days later, and by August of 2011 after 8 monthly cycles of Chemo, my cancer was pronounced to be in remission.

I've been back a couple of times since then to the BMT for follow-up treatments, so when I say that I am familiar with this special Spa you understand why. The amazing staff, exceptional facility, and miraculous drugs are World class.

My profound thanks to every person and agency that has made this possible, Pat Alexander

It's Friday, the day I get to spend being pampered in the special Spa on the 6th floor of the Blackmore Pavilion at Vancouver General Hospital.

A modern Spa is a place where people go to get rejuvenated, improve their health, be attended to by professional caring staff, and get away from their day to day busy lives for a while. This is certainly the case at my VGH Spa, plus the staff have spent many years receiving extensive training and specialized work experience before they are chosen to join the team. Rows of expensive equipment are at the ready, and clients are encouraged to choose a favourite machine to begin their journey toward a healthier body. I usually like to pick a room with a city view and an extra comfy reclining chair, although sometimes laying on an adjustable bed suits the day's activities better. I've become quite familiar with this Spa, many of the staff, and its unique features... I've been coming here off and on for 10 years.



Never hesitate
to contact us,
we're here to help!

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