



## **What you need to know about *Your Symptoms Matter* (For healthcare providers)**

*Your Symptoms Matter (YSM)* is a set of patient-reported outcome measures (PROMs) that asks patients to rate the severity of their cancer symptoms. It may also be referred to as a symptom screening tool or questionnaire. PROMs are validated tools that provide a comprehensive picture of how cancer and treatment are impacting their health status and quality of life from the patient's perspective.

### ***Your Symptoms Matter* helps patients communicate with you**

*Your Symptoms Matter* is one way for your patients to communicate how they are feeling to you and the rest of their care team. It is especially valuable for patients who may not feel comfortable or confident starting a conversation about how they are feeling.

Symptom screening can help you to:

- Identify concerning symptoms early
- Understand which symptoms matter to your patient
- Track symptoms over time
- Create a plan to help manage your patients' symptoms

Studies have shown that routine symptom screening and management can:

- Reduce emergency department visits<sup>i</sup>
- Increase a patient's ability to comply with treatment<sup>ii</sup>
- Increase survival<sup>iii</sup>

## **Symptom Screening & Data Collection**

### **How do patients complete *Your Symptoms Matter*?**

Your patients may be asked to complete YSM before their cancer care appointments at Ontario Regional Cancer Centres and their partner hospitals.

Patients typically complete YSM in-clinic on a kiosk, computer, tablet, or paper form. Patients may also complete their symptom screening remotely via a weblink on their personal cell phone, tablet or home computer. The specific PROM they are offered, and any limits to how often they can



complete the PROM, are automatically managed by the electronic collection tool, called ISAAC (Interactive Symptom Assessment and Collection tool).

Below is an example from the Revised Edmonton Symptom Assessment Scale (ESAS-r +) PROM, which is referred to as *Your Symptoms Matter – General Symptoms +*. This question asks patients to rate their pain from a scale of 0 to 10. A score of 0 means they do not have any pain today. A score of 10 means that their pain is at its very worst.

Progress: 13 %

[Start Over](#)

**Your Symptoms Matter - General Symptoms + Pain**

Please select the number that best describes how you feel **NOW**:

No Pain Worst Possible Pain

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

### Which PROMs are offered to patients with cancer in *Your Symptoms Matter*?

PROM	Name	Patient Population	Implementation Status	Recommended Symptom Screening Frequency
Revised Edmonton Symptom Assessment Scale (ESAS-r+) *	YSM – General Symptoms +	All cancer patients, except those who complete disease-site specific PROMs (example: EPIC-CP for patients with early prostate cancer who are not on chemotherapy)	Provincially implemented	<p>For patients who are new to the cancer centre or starting high intensity therapies: weekly screening</p> <p>For patients undergoing a change of therapy or with poorly controlled symptoms: screening as needed</p> <p>In all cases, use clinical judgement and screen as needed</p>



<b>Patient Reported Functional Status (PRFS)</b>	YSM – Daily Activities	All cancer patients who complete ESAS-r+, EPIC-CP, and MDASI	Provincially implemented	Accompanies ESAS-r+
<b>Expanded Prostate Cancer Index Composite (EPIC-CP)</b>	YSM – Prostate Cancer	Patients with early prostate cancer who are not on chemotherapy	Provincially implemented	Patients can complete every 14 days
<b>MD Anderson Symptom Inventory (MDASI-Head and Neck)</b>	YSM – Head and Neck Cancer	Patients with head and neck cancer	Pilot at select sites	Patients can complete every 7 days
<b>Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9)</b>	YSM – Emotional Distress	Cancer patients experiencing emotional and psychological distress, based on their YSM – General Symptoms + scores	Pilot at select sites	Patients can complete every 21 days

\* Note: In 2022 and 2023, Regional Cancer Centres and partner hospitals transitioned from using ESAS-r to ESAS-r+, which includes three new questions about patients’ sleep, constipation, and diarrhea symptoms

### Where can I see my patients’ *Your Symptoms Matter* responses?

YSM responses may be available in your patient’s electronic medical record or as a paper form in their chart. YSM responses are also available in the ISAAC (Interactive Symptom Assessment and Collection tool) administrative database at <https://isaacadmin.ontariohealth.ca>. If you are unsure of where to look for YSM responses, please contact the Ontario Cancer Symptom Management Collaborative (OCSMC) lead at your Regional Cancer Centre.

### Helping your patients to manage their symptoms

Talking with your patients about their symptom scores can help build trust and rapport. Symptom management algorithms and patient guides are available to help you appropriately respond to PROMs and support patients with managing their symptoms.

**Link to algorithms and patient guides:** <https://www.cancercareontario.ca/en/symptom-management>



## How can I promote YSM to my patients?

The *Your Symptoms Matter* Resource webpage includes posters, volunteer resources, and educational guides about general symptom screening. Materials in the resource hub should be used to promote YSM at your cancer centre.

**Link to resource webpage:** <https://www.cancercareontario.ca/en/your-symptoms-matter-resources?redirect=true>

## Screening Rates and Reporting

### What does Ontario Health do with PROM data from *Your Symptoms Matter*?

Ontario Health collects data to report screening rates and symptom profiles back to your Regional Cancer Program to inform quality improvement efforts. If you have any questions about your site's PROM data, please contact the Ontario Cancer Symptom Management Collaborative (OCSMC) lead at your Regional Cancer Centre.

### How are PROM screening rates calculated?

A screening rate is the percentage of cancer patients at the cancer centre (registered for virtual or in-person cancer care) who were screened with a PROM at least once in a given month.

**If you have any additional questions, please contact the Ontario Health (Cancer Care Ontario) Symptom Management inbox:** [OH-CCO\\_SymptomManagement@ontariohealth.ca](mailto:OH-CCO_SymptomManagement@ontariohealth.ca)

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<sup>i</sup> Basch, E., Barbera, L., Kerrigan, C. L., & Velikova, G. (2018). Implementation of patient-reported outcomes in routine medical care. *American Society of Clinical Oncology Educational Book*, (38), 122–134. [https://doi.org/10.1200/edbk\\_200383](https://doi.org/10.1200/edbk_200383)

<sup>ii</sup> Barbera, L., Sutradhar, R., Howell, D., Sussman, J., Seow, H., Dudgeon, D., Atzema, C., Earle, C., Husain, A., Liu, Y., & Krzyzanowska, M. K. (2015). Does routine symptom screening with ESAS decrease ED visits in breast cancer patients undergoing adjuvant chemotherapy? *Supportive Care in Cancer*, 23(10), 3025–3032. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00520-015-2671-3>

<sup>iii</sup> Basch, E., Deal, A. M., Dueck, A. C., Scher, H. I., Kris, M. G., Hudis, C., & Schrag, D. (2017). Overall survival results of a trial assessing patient-reported outcomes for symptom monitoring during routine cancer treatment. *JAMA*, 318(2), 197. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2017.7156>