



## **Cancer Guidelines updated in BANT Professional Practice Handbook**

Hello there,

In 2023, BANT worked over a number of months with specialists in the field of cancer, including Dr Nina Fuller-Shavel and Dr Carol Granger, to establish new **Cancer Guidelines** in order to support safe practice and the profession as a whole.

It is a common requirement in the healthcare community for practitioners working with some specific health concerns, where there is a need to work in collaboration with other healthcare professionals and/or a heightened risk of inadvertently doing harm, that practitioners complete additional post-graduation training in their chosen field of practice.

To support client and practitioner safety and further collaboration with the wider healthcare community, BANT Cancer Guidelines and recommendations to complete additional post-graduation training have been further updated based on questions received from members. The Guidelines strongly recommend that only Registered Nutritional Therapy Practitioners and BANT Registered Nutritionists® who have completed an appropriately accredited or recognised specialist CPD post-qualification training should support individuals with a confirmed or suspected cancer diagnosis.

These Guidelines apply to both BANT members in clinical practice and those working with groups or giving talks.

Member interest in working with individuals with a confirmed or suspected cancer diagnosis has been positive and currently approximately 40 BANT Members are listed to work with cancer in the BANT Practitioner Search. This is a very good start, however, demand from clients is increasing and with the current sobering estimation that during the next decade one in two people are predicted to have some form of cancer, a greater number of qualified NTs will be needed to satisfy the demand.

There are two routes to achieve the required additional training available for BANT Members and both are detailed in [Application Process for Additional Training](#) section of the handbook.

You will see that further points of clarification have been added to the guidelines following queries from Members either wishing to pursue the additional training or questioning at what point the current NT scope of practice is sufficient to work with cancer clients who have completed treatment.

The main points of clarification are as follows:

1. To be included in the BANT Cancer Health Concern Listing, you will be a Full Practising Member of BANT and have been in clinical practice for a minimum of 3 years after qualifying as a Nutritional Therapist.
2. If you have not yet worked with cancer in your practice, submit a character reference from a referee that can support your work as a Nutritional Therapist in any field other than cancer.
3. Secondary prevention is about working with people who have had cancer. If a client has had cancer and is still under the care of a consultant or GP or taking medication, it is strongly recommended that NTs complete the additional post-qualification training before working with them, as this is similar to working with clients with active cancer.

See the full [Cancer Guidelines](#) in BANT Professional Practice Handbook.

As well as working with clients who require support with a specific health condition such as cancer, BANT Members also have a significant role to play in disease prevention and promoting the application of nutrition and lifestyle sciences for optimum health.

Therefore, BANT members without this additional training in cancer have an essential role to play in working with clients to provide preventative nutrition and lifestyle recommendations to help reduce the risk of cancer particularly since the condition is increasingly becoming identified as a metabolic disease.

Of equal importance, BANT Members without additional post-qualification training in cancer have also an opportunity to support those who have had cancer medication prescribed to them during an active treatment period, have been discharged from care and no longer take cancer medication.

To help you determine your individual scope of practice in cases such as this, please take a look at the frequently asked questions below.

## Frequently Asked Questions

***1Q: Can I support a client who has a previous cancer diagnosis? This is NOT current cancer, and they are no longer receiving any treatment or taking any medication. They have enquired into support for general healthy eating and weight loss.***

**1A:** Yes, the Guidelines explain that NTs with no specific post-qualification training in cancer, may support clients who have had active cancer, received treatment, are no longer taking cancer medication, and have been fully discharged.

In line with best practice, please document all consultations and ensure the client's GP is informed (with the client's permission) of any recommendations that you make. Going forward, should any form of cancer return, please refer the client on to a practitioner with additional cancer training.

**2Q: Can I work with a current client who, after ER+ breast cancer treatment takes Letrozole since 2017. She has routine follow-ups with her oncologist and provided me with a report confirming she has no signs of suspected cancer. Her request for a consultation is not cancer related but for diarrhoea and fatigue.**

**NOTE: Similar questions have been asked about clients taking Exemestane following active breast cancer treatment. The reply is the same.**

**2A:** No, as your client seems to be on a long-term prescription of Letrozole, which is a nonsteroidal aromatase inhibitor to decrease the amount of oestrogen produced by the body.

This drug has multiple side-effects, including those within the digestive system and also fatigue. Since she is under the continued care of an oncologist who will monitor the drug's effectiveness with an aim to avoid the reoccurrence of cancer, we recommend that your client works with somebody who understands both the dietary and supplemental interactions with Letrozole as is relevant to her ER+ cancer which is being managed by this drug and that you therefore refer her to a practitioner who has completed additional cancer training.

Both diet and supplements need to be considered to ensure the effectiveness of the drug and to ensure that neither inadvertently support the growth of cancer cells.

Please review the 1-hour webinar by Carol Granger supporting BANT Cancer Guidelines, she talks about how diet can impact the drugs used for cancer treatment. This gives you more insight to why this is so important.

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